

news

significant shorts

McAliskey granted bail to stay with her baby

IRA terrorist suspect Roisin McAliskey was yesterday granted bail by a High Court judge to enable her to be transferred to a specialist National Health Service mother and baby unit.

Ms McAliskey, 25, who gave birth to a daughter, Loimair, a week ago at the Whittington hospital in north London, was granted bail at an earlier High Court hearing allowing her to be taken to the hospital from Holloway prison where she was awaiting extradition proceedings to Germany where the authorities want to question her over a mortar bomb attack on a British Army base last summer.

Ms McAliskey's solicitor, Gareth Peirce, said outside the court yesterday: "She has been granted bail to go to a specialist NHS mother and baby unit and that is all we can say."

Councils win freedom

The Government yesterday announced that it would sign a European charter guaranteeing the freedom of local councils from interference from the centre. The Conservatives had resisted signing for years. Hilary Armstrong, Environment minister, said that agreeing to the Council of Europe's Charter of Local Self-Government would bring in a new era in the relations between Whitehall and councils. She plans a series of joint studies by government and councils on city regeneration, planning and new ways of involving the public in decision-making. **David Walker**

Britain urged to act over landmines

Britain could become the world leader in clearing the "scourge" of landmines across the globe, Martin Bell, Independent MP and former BBC war correspondent, claimed yesterday. Speaking at the Mines Advisory Group exhibition at St James's Church, Piccadilly, London, the MP for Tatton said: "The technology is there. The inventors and engineers are there. The need world-wide is certainly there. All that it lacks is the political will. I profoundly hope that we have it." Mr Bell said there could be as many as 110 million landmines still in the ground. "It is like a virus or epidemic that has spread quite recently and on a global scale," he said.

Cuillins guard their peace

The rugged Cuillin mountains on the Isle of Skye have been spared being buzzed every 15 minutes by £30-a-head helicopter rides for tourists. Following protests, Skye councillors have rejected an application by London-based Man Friday Helicopters (MFH) to use an airstrip near the village of Broadford for the flights. MFH had fallen back to the airstrip after abandoning plans for helipads at two other locations. More than 1,500 objections were received by the Skye and Loch Alsh council, mostly from climbers and walkers who regard the Cuillins (above) as the finest mountain landscape in Britain. There were also fears about the impact of frequent flights on golden eagles which nest in the corries. **Stephen Goodwin**

Britons sent home from Thai jails

Sandra Gregory, who was jailed for 25 years for trying to smuggle heroin out of Thailand, will return to Britain on Thursday to serve the rest of her sentence. Gregory, 32, was found carrying 89g of heroin in February 1993 as she and fellow Briton Robert Lock tried to board a flight from Bangkok to Tokyo. Mr Lock was cleared last year of drug trafficking. Gregory and three British men also jailed for possession of heroin – Andrew McGarrity, serving 52 years, Kevin Grant, 25 years, and Peter Heather, 40 years – are all returning under a transfer treaty with Thailand.

Rover withdraws hostage advert

The Rover car company has responded to complaints by withdrawing a television advert which features a blindfolded hostage being rescued. Rover said the company and the Independent Television Commission had received complaints on the appropriateness of the advert for the 600 model at a time of hostage tension involving Britons. "If we have offended anyone, we apologise," group corporate affairs director Bernard Carey said. "... it was never our intention to cause controversy or offence."

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria ... Sch140 Ntanda ... £5.00
Belgium ... BE90 Italy ... £4.500
Canada ... PS300 Malta ... £sc325
Cyprus ... C£1.20 Malta ... 43 cents
Denmark ... Dkr1.20 Norway ... Nkr20
Ish Rep ... £5.40 Portugal ... £sc325
France ... F1.4 Spain ... Ps300
Germany ... DM1.5 Sweden ... Skr21
Greece ... Dr650 Switzerland ... Sfr.00
Luxembourg ... £1.60 USA ... \$3.00

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS
Air mail, 13 weeks: Europe £11.00; Zone 1 (Middle East, America, Africa and India) £14.00; Zone 2 (Far East and Australia) £20.00. To order please send cheque payable to Johnson International Media Services Ltd at 43 Millbank, London SW1P 4RR or telephone 0171-536 8256. Credit card welcome.

Back issues of the Independent are available from: Magne Newspapers, telephone 01208 840370.

Read

THE INDEPENDENT
online every day on AOL
Call 0800 376 5376
for FREE software – quote "Independent".

people



John Patterson: Fear of panic attacks turned him into a recluse (Photograph: PA)

Tragic end for romantic hero who was a loser in love

John Patterson, the man who gave romantic hope to thousands of single people through his Date-line dating agency, died a lonely, broken man after two failed relationships and a history of alcoholism.

He was found dead in his bath one morning in January by his former wife Sandy Nye, an inquest was told.

Mr Patterson, 52, earned more than £2m from his successful computer dating agency. He had been a dynamic and energetic man, spending much of his wealth on his great passion – flying. After Ms Nye divorced him in 1982, he had a relationship with his secretary, Kim Sellick, with whom he had two sons; but that too broke down.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, alcohol abuse began to wreck his life, and in the years preceding his death he was a virtual recluse, trapped in his own home for fear of panic attacks, the inquest heard.

The day before his death, Mr Patterson, his assistant Mark Cowley and Ms Nye travelled from his home, Chesterton Manor near Oxford, to Ms Nye's home at Elm Manor near Wisbech in Cambridgeshire, to help him overcome his fear of going out.

That night, Ms Nye stayed at her other home in nearby Walpole St Peter after a rehearsal with her opera-

atic society, and Mr Patterson stayed at Elm Manor with Mr Cowley.

Ms Nye found his body slumped in the bath the next morning, January 29. He had drunk four-and-a-half times the legal limit for driving – 367mg in 100ml of blood, enough to kill someone less tolerant to drink, the coroner was told.

Ms Nye told the inquest she arrived at Elm Manor at 9am.

"I went up to the bedroom and saw him in the bath, but it looked like he was asleep. I said, 'What are you doing sleeping in the bath?' and then I realised he was all grey," she said.

"He was sat up in the bath with his arms on the sides, his head was sideways and the water was just up to his nose and his hair wasn't wet."

A Home Office pathologist, Dr Nat Cary, told the inquest on Monday at Wisbech magistrates court that Mr Patterson died from drowning and chronic alcoholism and had probably slipped or fallen in the bath.

The coroner, William Morris, recorded a verdict of accidental death, saying that "for some reason or other he slipped under the water".

Matthew Brace

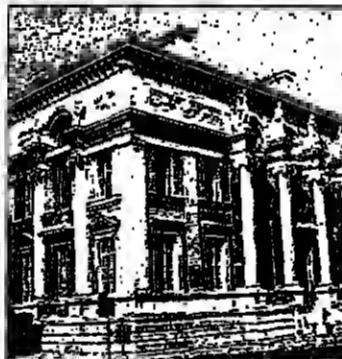
Ashmolean's new director snubs Oxford

The new director of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum has shocked academics by resigning before he even started.

Dr George Goldner, a leading figure in the New York art world, has told Oxford University that he does not want the job after all.

The Ashmolean (right) announced in December that Dr Goldner, formerly senior curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York had been appointed director. He was due to take up the post in October when the present director, Professor Christopher White, stands down.

But Dr Goldner said yesterday that he had changed his mind and decided to stay in New York. "A variety of things, personal and professional, led to a change of heart on behalf of my wife and myself," Dr Goldner said. One was understood to be the fact that he was unable to find a suitable house in Oxford. Asked if he was



dissatisfied with the homes available, he said: "There was an element of that. But I would not want to comment further."

Professor White said: "It is very sad ... Dr Goldner would have made a very good director. He had been to Oxford several times to look around. It seems it didn't work out." He said that unlike other internationally famous museums, there was no property automatically provided for the Ashmolean director.

The Ashmolean, Britain's oldest public museum, having opened in 1683, and is named after Elias Ashmole who gave the first collections. **Jojo Moyes**

Love in a cold climate for Eskimo wife

A student has swapped her degree studies for a traditional life on the frozen fringes of the Arctic with an Eskimo hunter.

Jo Matthews, 23, gave up her zoology course at Aberdeen University after meeting Mark Alagu, an Inuit, during a scientific expedition with her scientist father in northern Canada.

The couple fell in love but Ms Matthews, who was brought up in Sheffield and York, decided to get married. They now have a 22-month-old son, Jajia, and live a traditional life in Salluit, near Hudson Bay, where they eat caribou and make clothes out of animal skins.

Ms Matthews said: "When I came to live with Mark here I knew it was exactly the right thing for me to do. It never felt like a big decision to make."

"I knew in my own mind I was making the right choice and I have been very, very happy living here."

briefing

HEALTH

Mental patients left to cope in isolation

Care for the mentally ill is "going backwards" with many people with schizophrenia living days on end without professional or social contact, the charity Sane claimed today.

A survey of 54 diagnosed sufferers of schizophrenia found that only five had places at day or drop-in centres and only four had been offered counselling or psychotherapy. One in five said that they felt that there was insufficient time allocated by doctors or psychiatrists to talk about their illness or treatment. "We seem to be going backwards in the care we offer," said Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of Sane. "Desperate people are fighting alone or with very little help against the often frightening symptoms of their illness. The most damning finding is that many psychiatrists and GPs are seen as often reluctant to give time or understanding leaving seriously ill people isolated and at increased risk of self-harm or suicide."

Glenda Cooper

ENVIRONMENT

UK under fire over beach pollution

The European Commission was today urged to take legal action against the UK for "persistent and planned failure" to free beaches of sewage pollution.

The call came from the Marine Conservation Society which said 49 UK beaches were still sewage-contaminated 21 years after an EC bathing water directive was laid down. "It is a scandal that despite years of protest ... these beaches fail to meet minimum legal limits for sewage pollution," said the society's conservation director Guy Linley-Adams.

The society said the UK had broken commitments given to the European Court of Justice in 1991 to achieve full compliance to the bathing water directive by 1995, and had broken its own revised target of 95 per cent compliance by 1995. "It is high time we were not so soft with our record profit-making water companies. It is up to the new Government to stop the pollution of our beaches once and for all," said Mr Linley-Adams.



EMPLOYMENT

Experience is top job requirement

When it comes to job hunting, where applicants have worked is more important than their skills or qualifications. And personal contacts may be a better source of vacancies than an employment agency, according to a new survey into recruitment.

The Institute of Personnel and Development asked recruiters which factors were most important in deciding the best candidate for a job. Past experience came top, followed by skills, competence, qualifications and finally personal qualities. It also emerged that word-of-mouth recruitment was widespread – which was a cause of concern because it "perpetuated existing imbalances in the workforce". Angela Barlow, author of the survey, said: "If you ask a white, middle-class thirtysomething man to recommend someone, he is likely to recommend someone very similar. It also prevents employers from accessing the best-possible talent available because it restricts their options to the limited number of people known to their existing workforce."

WEATHER

Little respite for drought-hit regions

Rainfall in May on England and Wales was above the long term average for the month, but only by 5 per cent, the Meteorological Office said yesterday.

This has helped to keep the threat of sprinkler and hosepipe bans in the drought-hit South-east and East Anglia at bay. But while the water companies report full or nearly full reservoirs, groundwater levels remain low. For the three spring months of March, April and May taken together, cumulative rainfall in England and Wales has been only 63 per cent of the long-term average for the past 30 years. In East Anglia, the spring rainfall was just 26 per cent of the region's long-term average; the next most rainfall-starved region was south-east England where the percentage was 42 per cent. Scotland, meanwhile, has received well above average.

Nicholas Schoon

HEALTH SERVICES

Physiotherapists in short supply

Nine out of ten NHS trusts are experiencing difficulty recruiting physiotherapists, according to a survey. Of the 78 trusts surveyed two-thirds said the problem had worsened over the last three years. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, which conducted the survey said poor pay and heavy workloads were the chief reasons.

Jeremy Laurance



NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

It pays to network with Dell.

DELL POWEREDGE 2100

• PENTIUM® PRO PROCESSOR 180MHz (200MHz option available)
• 32Mb EDD ECC RAM (extra RAM free brings this to 64Mb)
• INTEGRATED PCI ULTRA/WIDE SCSI CONTROLLER
• 2Gb ULTRA WIDE SCSI HARD DISK DRIVE
• 15" COLOUR VGA MONITOR (11.7" viewable area)
• 8 SPEED SCSI CD-ROM DRIVE
• 3CDM 3C590 NETWORK CARD
• INTEL SERVER MANAGER V2.5
• FREE OFFER ONLY ON DELL POWEREDGE
• 2100 FOR LIMITED PERIOD ONLY

£1,699

EXTRA
32Mb
RAM
FREE



PENTIUM® PRO
PROCESSOR

The mouse that roared



Charles Arthur
Science Editor

The trade wars of the future could be fought over the ownership and exploitation of human genes - not spices, or fish, or computer chips, like those of the past. Though the connection may seem obscure, the success of a team in Japan which yesterday announced it had bred mice with an entire human chromosome, containing thousands of genes, moves that day a little closer.

A legal battle is already brewing between an American company, Biocyte, and a number of European government-funded bodies. The issue is complex, but boils down to this: Biocyte has the rights to use the blood cells from the umbilical cord of any baby born in the European Union. European doctors and blood specialists strongly oppose the granting of that right, made earlier this year by the European Patent Office.

The Japanese work transplanted a number of human genes which produce antibodies for the human immune system into embryo cells of mice, which then grew into healthy adults. Crucially, their blood contained human antibody proteins, confirming the success of the gene's movement.

Previous gene work has managed to create "transgenic" animals containing one or two genes from another organism - a plant, animal or human - but never before has an entire chromosome been successfully incorporated into another animal's DNA.

Steve Jones, professor of genetics at University College, London (UCL), called the work, reported today in the science journal *Nature Genetics*, "a remarkable technical breakthrough".

The future applications could



Gene wars: Legal battles loom over the right to use blood from umbilical cords in transgenic work such as moving human chromosomes to mice. Photograph: Science Photo Library

include the creation of transgenic animals which would make antibodies to all sorts of human illnesses. Biotechnology, using transgenic animals is forecast to be a multi-billion dollar business. Imagine, for example, if cows could produce human antibodies: their milk could replace both breast-feeding and powdered milk.

And that is only one of a myriad of possibilities. A trade war could follow if regional patent offices began turning down patents from abroad for "local" reasons. On that basis, the challenges to the Biocyte patent could be the first step to a gene trade dispute.

But in the short term the most certain result of the latest

work is that patent offices around the world will soon receive copies of applications from the Japanese group, "patenting" the mice's DNA and the "techniques used" to produce it. To many people, the idea of patenting genes and DNA - the blueprint for all living things - is repellent. But Professor Jones insists that the

only way forward is to be pragmatic about the commercial aspects of biotechnology, and exploit them to our advantage.

"There's no field of human endeavour in which we don't have intellectual property rights," he said yesterday. "If you can patent plant varieties, as already happens, you can patent genes and DNA. You

can't then say human DNA is a special chemical. You have already swallowed the camel."

This is where Biocyte has stepped in and identified the umbilical blood cells (known as "stem cells" - as biological "mother cells" which, when introduced into diseased parts of the body, can generate healthy

blood cells. More than 500 people have already benefited from that, as an alternative to replacing diseased bone marrow (which normally produces new blood cells), in cases of inherited blood disorders and cancers. Stem cells exist only in the foetus, and can normally only be collected from the umbilicus. But a consortium of nation-

al blood transfusion services from the UK, France, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands, with the European Bone Marrow Association, and challenging the Biocyte patent on the basis that it is too broad. Their appeal will not be heard until some time next year.

Meanwhile, a parent could only prevent the umbilical blood cells from becoming Biocyte's intellectual property by altering the hospital consent form to exclude the cells' collection - but that would prevent their use in potentially lifesaving medical treatments.

Professor Jones suggests that the only way forward will be for everybody to become more aware of the value of their genetic material, and hanging on to it - possibly by altering consent forms. In 1984 in the US a man whose extracted spleen cells were used by the drugs company Sandoz to create new products sued the company for a share of the benefits - but lost because the consent form abrogated his rights once the tissues were removed from his body.

"Companies will try to make consent forms ambiguous and wide ranging, and play on people's fears," Professor Jones said. "I certainly wouldn't sign a consent form willy-nilly. People have got to become aware of what they're signing."

Biotechnology companies insist that the enormous investments they have made justify the breadth of their patents. Sometimes, though, the companies make the gamble and lose - badly. In 1989 the chemicals giant DuPont began offering for sale its patented "Oncomouse" - a mouse with a genetic predisposition to develop cancer. It spent more than \$10 million on the controversial research and licensing. But almost ten years later, DuPont has seen barely any revenue from it.

Top auction houses face inquiry over price-fixing

David Usborne
and Stephen Goodwin

Christie's, the London-based auction house, is assisting the United States Justice Department in a sweeping investigation into allegations of illegal price-fixing in the elite world of fine arts dealing in New York City.

US officials have in recent weeks served subpoenas on several auction firms, including Sotheby's, and on a wide range of top-drawer Manhat-

tan galleries for information that may help with the inquiry.

Investigators have seized truck-loads of documents including travel records, telephone bills and correspondence between auction houses and dealers. They are looking for evidence of "bid pooling" or "bid rigging", which entails buyers agreeing in advance of a fine arts auction to hold back from bidding against each other for a work and thus holding down the selling price

They can then sell on the piece at a considerable profit.

Christie's disclosure of the Grand Jury subpoena was made as part of a statement to the Stock Exchange announcing its intention to raise US\$75m (£46.8m) to finance new premises in the Rockefeller Centre in New York and expand facilities elsewhere. When raising money, companies are under a duty to disclose any information that may be relevant to shareholders.

Peter Blythe, Christie's group finance director, said the company's US subsidiary, Christie's Inc, was co-operating fully with the Justice Department and believed it had "acted properly at all times".

Clearly, bid rings are not something which auctioneers favour because we benefit from getting the very best price for the seller," Mr Blythe said. Auction houses make their living by levying a buyer's premium of up to 15 per cent on works sold.

Bid rigging is also illegal in Britain but rumours of pooling by dealers circulate at intervals.

News of the investigation sent shockwaves through the fine arts community in New York yesterday.

If any wrongdoing is uncovered it could seriously tarnish an industry that depends on a sterling reputation to retain its clientele.

"This kind of thing puts us all in a bad light and could cost some dealers lots of money," remarked Wal-

ter Edelman of the Edelman gallery. A frequent visitor at both Christie's and Sotheby's, Mr Edelman said he had never been approached by a rigging consortium. But the allegations did not seem outlandish to him.

One of the galleries to have received a subpoena spoke to *The Independent*, anonymously. "We do not know of any instances where this has happened," the owner said. "But there may be people out there like this; every gallery has to make a profit."

it. It's clear that in the history of art dealing there have been cases of people working together in this way."

Another technique for rigging sales involves dealers paying commissions to potential rivals to persuade them not to bid.

The Justice Department refused to offer any details of the investigation. But a spokeswoman confirmed that "the anti-trust division is looking at the possibility of anti-competitive practices in the fine art auction industry".

"I've just received my annual bonus from work, which I'd like to invest. I don't want to tie my money up for years, but how can I get a good return that's guaranteed?"

Mark Roberts, Barnsley.

"THE INTEREST RATE FOR NATIONAL SAVINGS FIRST OPTION BONDS HAS BEEN INCREASED

to 6.25%pa gross (5.0%pa net)

- fixed for one year. And they

offer a higher rate of 6.5%pa

gross (5.2%pa net) for a bond of

£20,000 or over. At each anniversary you

have the option to withdraw your money or leave it to continue earning interest at a new fixed rate for a further 12 months. What's more, as the interest is paid net of tax, FIRST Option Bonds are ideal for basic rate taxpayers."

Buy now using the coupon in Your Money. Or for a full guide to our FIRST Option Bonds freecall

0800 00 00 00

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

NATIONAL SAVINGS
Investment Ideas

Unique Investment Opportunities from HM Treasury

PAPERS
DONT RECYCLING

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

724856

news

Psychiatric patient stabbed baby after walking out of ward

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

A violent psychiatric patient who stabbed a baby in a random attack was able to walk out of a hospital unchallenged and was not missed for several hours, a court heard yesterday.

Mental health charities yesterday called for increased

staffing levels in psychiatric units after Malcolm Calladine, who had a history of knife attacks was able to abscond from Highbury Hospital, Nottingham, earlier this year.

He stabbed one-year-old Ashleigh Baker in the stomach with a three-inch knife in front of her mother Norma-Jean. The child's life was saved by the

prompt action of a passer-by, Pauline Edwards, who administered first aid until an ambulance arrived. Ashleigh underwent emergency surgery and has since made a full recovery. Ms Edwards was yesterday awarded £100 from public funds by the court in recognition of her action.

Calladine, who has a mental

age of eight, later told the police that he had attacked the child because he wanted to be moved from the hospital to live with his sister.

Nottingham Crown Court was told that he had been in and out of psychiatric hospitals since the age of five and had several convictions for indecent assault on children as well as a history of

knife attacks. He was known to have absconded repeatedly from different hospitals including Highbury where he had lived since 1991, said the prosecution.

Judge John Hopkins said it was worrying that Calladine had been able to abscond so easily and ordered that he be detained under the Mental Health Act indefinitely. "It is a cause

for some concern that this man who appears to have threatened people with knives, and been generally disruptive and violent, was allowed in a hospital where there is not stricter security with the result that this terrible incident occurred," he said.

Nottingham Healthcare NHS Trust, which has launched an independent inquiry, said

that its own inquiry had concluded that events leading up to the incident "could not have been predicted".

But the mental health charity SANE called for increased staffing levels on the front-line of psychiatric care to curb the risk of such incidents. Graeme McMorrow, legal and policy manager for SANE said: "It is a disgrace that he could disappear off a ward in such circumstances and that staff didn't even know he was missing for several hours."

Peter Hill of the Zito Trust added: "We would express concern at the apparent ease with which this patient absconded but the details are for the independent inquiry to investigate."

Treetop Animal protests in a concrete overcoat

Michael Streeter

After the re-emergence of Swampy, it was the turn yesterday of another well-known eco-warrior to step into the limelight when 17-year-old Animal was lowered from a treetop in one of the most dramatic episodes so far of the two-weeks eviction near Manchester Airport.

The youthful veteran of the A30 protest at Fairmile in January had been suspended precariously 50ft up in the trees since Friday, and since Monday had been attached by ropes to a huge lump of concrete inside an oil drum.

Overseen by a safety observer from the protesters, bailiffs inched her down carefully with the help of a cherry-picker crane, her arm still tied to the drum. They later took three hours breaking up the concrete "lock on" – estimated to weigh more than a ton – with a pneumatic drill before Animal was finally cut free and taken away in a police van.

One campaign organiser, Jeff Gazzard, said: "As far as we know she is fine. She is a very determined protester."

The drama and danger of the removal was summed up by the Under Sheriff for Cheshire, Randal Hibbert, who personally oversaw the action. He said: "She was brought down from the trees in a very delicate operation. Any small mistake by the bailiffs would have resulted in her breaking her arm."

Animal's emergence at the Manchester second runway demonstration follows her presence at the A30 action at Fairmile, Devon, earlier this year, when she and Swampy were eventually removed from a tunnel. On Monday, Swampy was evicted from Fairmile for the second time.

At the time, Animal was asked if she would be prepared to go through a similar experience again. She replied: "Absolutely. No reservations at all."

The officials expect to remove six others still in trees by this morning but eight protesters remain in three tunnels.

Mr Gazzard said all the remaining demonstrators were in good spirits and predicted the eviction to clear the site for the £172m runway could take another week.

A spokeswoman for Manchester Airport said Civil Aviation Authority figures quoted by protesters, which showed that the volume of air traffic fell last summer, were "selective" and ignored the fact that volume was up 7 per cent this year and was projected to grow by 6 per cent year on year.



Stuck fast: Animal, with her arm in a concrete 'lock on', protests against the second runway at Manchester

Photograph: News Team

Mowlam seeks to speed up Ulster talks

David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

Multi-party talks resumed yesterday in Northern Ireland overshadowed by uncertainties on the state of play within the IRA and Sinn Fein, the fear of a violent marching season and generally low expectations of early breakthroughs.

The funeral of an RUC officer, kicked to death by drunken loyalists in a mob attack sparked by Protestant objections to RUC policing of parades, cast a further pall over proceedings. Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, warned that "a period of deep potential instability" lay ahead, with an obvious increase already in "sectarian bigotry."

In the face of these difficulties Ms Mowlam sought to inject impetus into the talks process by indicating that she wanted the parties to move on to substantive discussions in weeks.

This is seen as a hugely ambitious objective, given that the talks will shortly reach their first anniversary following a year of snail's-pace argument which has not yet even managed to produce an agreed agenda.

Meeting Ms Mowlam's target will therefore require a sharp burst of acceleration. This does not seem likely to happen, this week at least, given that the Rev Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists are staying away from the talks until the Northern Ireland Forum, an adjunct of the talks proper, meets on Friday.

The parties have yet to agree on how to deal with the controversial issue of arms decommissioning which dominated proceedings for much of the past year. The next few weeks will provide a test of whether the talks are to remain stalled or whether movement is a possibility.

As the parties gathered at the Stormont complex in east Belfast, a Sinn Fein delegation headed by the party's president, Gerry Adams, arrived at the gates to enact the now-familiar ritual in which the republicans are denied entry because of the absence of an IRA ceasefire.

This time they arrived to find the gates padlocked. The delegation handed in letters to the British and Irish governments, addressed the media, and left. Dublin's representative in the talks, Dick Spring, the for-

mer minister, replied that if the IRA declared a new ceasefire the governments could move very quickly in response. He added: "The reality for Sinn Fein is that they have the key in their own pocket."

In the meantime both governments appear to have left the door ajar for Sinn Fein, even after the weekend's 1,000lb IRA bombing attempt in west Belfast. Both London and Dublin have refrained from breaking off contacts with the republicans, even though Tony Blair has indicated that the communication link could depend on "events on the ground".

There is still general puzzle-



Mowlam: Warned of period of potential instability

ment about what the IRA hoped to gain with the bomb attack. Republicans were clearly anxious both to keep open their lines to the governments and to win a seat in this week's Irish general election, and the attempted bombing endangered both.

The Church of Ireland Bishop of Connor, the Right Rev James Moore, told mourners at the funeral of Constable Gregory Taylor that his killing was "savage in the extreme".

The chairman of the Northern Ireland Police Federation, Les Rodgers, meanwhile delivered a stinging attack on loyalist politicians. "Even the most eminent of the politicians in this community," he said, "had no hesitation in employing the cowardly tactic of reminding officers that they know where our homes and families are."

He said they had a duty to ensure that inflammatory words did not spur on "their wilder supporters" to attacks on police homes.

Free memory. Don't forget to call.

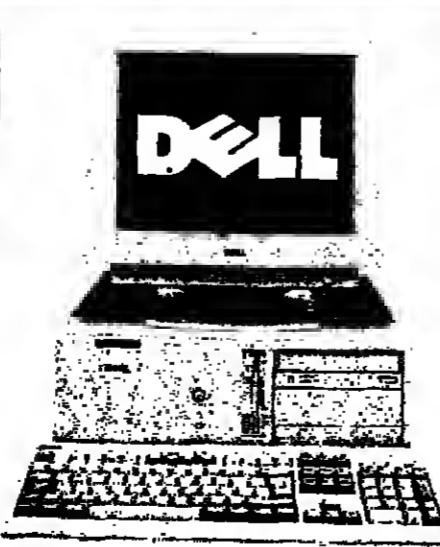
DELL DIMENSION™ XPS M166s

- INTEL PENTIUM® PROCESSOR
- WITH MMX™ TECHNOLOGY 166MHz
- 16MB SDRAM + EXTRA 16MB SDRAM FREE
- 512KB CACHE
- 2GB EIDE HARD DRIVE
- STB POWERGRAPH 64 3D™ PCI GRAPHICS CARD WITH 2MB VIDEO MEMORY
- 15" COLOUR VGA MONITOR (13.75" VIEWABLE AREA)
- 12-16X SPEED CD-ROM DRIVE
- MID-SIZED DESKTOP CHASSIS
- INTEGRATED 16-BIT SOUND (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL)
- WINDOWS 95 & MICROSOFT® OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION

£1,049 (£1,261.95)

incl. delivery & VAT

EXTRA
16Mb
RAM
FREE



pentium®

You won't forget will you? For a limited period only, we're offering an extra 16Mb of SDRAM memory for free* on the Dell Dimension™ XPS M166s, with its fast Pentium® Processor with MMX™ technology 166MHz. And remember this high-spec machine comes pre-loaded with Microsoft® Office 97 (SBE), making it ready to run and easy to use. Get in touch with the world's largest direct PC manufacturer** today on 01344 724752 and take advantage of our free offer. Time is running out.

*Free offer available only on Dell Dimension XPS M166s bonus bundle as specified until 21 June. **Source IDC

DELL

TALK DIRECT TO THE NUMBER ONE

01344 724752

Between 8am and 8pm weekdays, 10am to 4pm Sat

Visit our website: www.dell.com/uk

Dell and the Dell logo are registered trademarks and Dell Dimension is a trademark of Dell Computer Corporation. The Intel Inside logo and Pentium are registered trademarks and MMX is a trademark of Intel Corporation. Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks and Office 97 is a trademark of the Microsoft Corporation. All prices, offers and specifications are subject to change without prior notice or obligation. Dell supplied with Windows 95, Dell mouse and keyboard included. Dell Products c/o Melba House, Western Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, TN4 1RD. Offer available for a limited period only.

© 1997 Dell Computer Corporation. All rights reserved. Dell Computer Corporation is an equal opportunity employer.

of Ward
vlam.
ss to
d up
ster
lks



هكذا من الاصد

YOU WON'T earn your father's full RESPECT

just by buying him
LAPHROAIG.
Only by drinking it.

Laphroaig lovers and loathers. What separates them is often no wider than a generation gap. It takes a certain maturity to appreciate our malt's heathery smokiness. Only experienced palates can take to the oily medicinal tang. Bridge the gap, buy your father a bottle and maybe one for yourself. You might find you still have a lot to learn. Call 0990 134767 between now and Father's Day and the first 500 callers each day will receive a £2 off voucher.*

LAPHROAIG
no half measures.



CALLS SHOULD LAST NO MORE THAN 1 MINUTE. COST PER CALL PER MINUTE IS 10P. THE FIRST 500 CALLERS EACH DAY WILL BE SENT, VIA FIRST CLASS POST, A VOUCHER WORTH £2 WHEN USED IN PART PAYMENT, BY 31/12/97, FOR A 70CL BOTTLE OF LAPHROAIG SINGLE ISLAY MALT WHISKY AT PARTICIPATING OUTLETS. PROMOTION RESTRICTED TO UK RESIDENTS AGED 18 YEARS OR OVER AND LIMITED TO ONE VOUCHER PER HOUSEHOLD. LINES OPEN 24 HOURS PER DAY UNTIL 15/6/97. PROMOTER: ALLIED DOMEQ SPIRITS & WINE (UK) LTD, WORTHING ROAD, HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX RH12 1ST. ALCOHOL IS ONLY FOR PERSONS AGED 18 YEARS OR OVER.

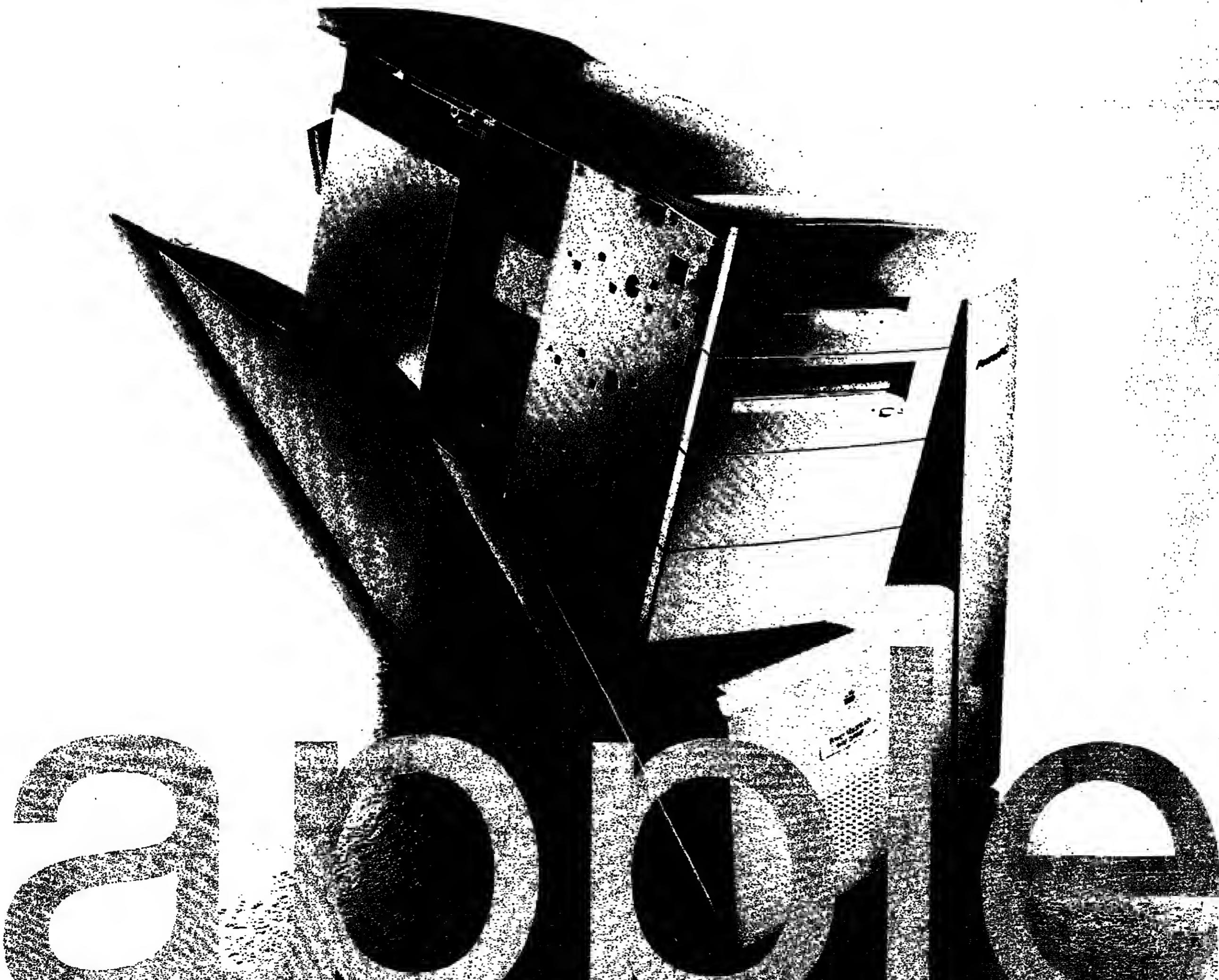


Only Apple has the technology and revolutionary design to stay ahead.

Introducing the Power Macintosh 9600.

The Power Macintosh™ 9600 is a powerful desktop computer which incorporates an industry first. Its unique design makes getting inside easier, so upgrading and maintenance becomes a piece of cake. You can add memory, evolve the processor and adapt your configuration to perfectly match your business needs and ambitions. As for performance, the Power Macintosh 9600 offers RISC technology at its best. The state-of-the-art PowerPC™ 604e processor speeds along at 233MHz and there's even a multiprocessor model for specialist speed junkies. You can manipulate the most complex images with ease, edit video sequences or create virtual reality environments for the Internet. Finally, its design also makes it one of the most secure computers around. A few systems might have as much capability as the Power Macintosh 9600, but no other offers its flexibility. To find out more, call the Apple Information Centre, free on: 0800 174574 or visit our Web site at: <http://www.euro.apple.com/uk>

Apple 



There are several other models in the Power Macintosh professional systems range. © May 1997 Apple Computer, Inc. The Apple logo is a registered trademark and Apple, Macintosh, Macintosh Performa and Power Macintosh are trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc., registered in the US and other countries.

الآن من الالصل

هذا من الأصل

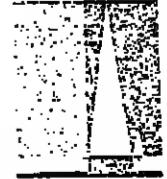
violence
en abuse

AT BONSAI
PRICES



Hurry. Don't miss the June 10th deadline.

By now, Norwich Union members should have received a full prospectus and application form to buy shares at a discount in the Members' Offer. NORWICH UNION



ISSUED BY NORWICH UNION PLC AND APPROVED BY KLEINWORT BENSON LIMITED (REGULATED BY THE SFA). THE VALUE OF SHARES CAN FLUCTUATE. ANY APPLICATION FOR SHARES SHOULD BE BASED ON THE OFFER PROSPECTUS ALONE. FOR ADVICE CONSULT A PROFESSIONAL ADVISER.

US cash for study of Gulf victims

Jeremy Lauance
Health Editor

The biggest study of the health of Britain's armed forces, paid for with \$1m from the Pentagon, begins this week in an attempt to settle the question of whether Gulf war syndrome exists.

Questionnaires are being sent to more than 10,000 soldiers and former soldiers who served in the Gulf, in Bosnia and who stayed at home. The idea is to discover whether there was something specific about serving in the Gulf that caused soldiers to fall ill or whether those who served in other hostile environments such as Bosnia suffered similar ailments.

Last month, the Government declared a new spirit of openness in dealing with Gulf war veterans and announced new animal studies into the toxic effects of drugs given to servicemen. John Reid, the armed forces minister, spoke of the Government's debt of honour to those who served their country and pledged that any illness suffered by them would be sympathetically and thoroughly investigated.

However, the Ministry of Defence is resisting compensation claims in the absence of any hard evidence that a separate and distinct illness associated with service in the Gulf exists. Instead, the ministry is hoping to avoid admissions of liability by being generous with war pensions, giving claimants with health problems that may be related to service in the Gulf the benefit of the doubt.

The Pentagon-funded study is being led by two specialists in unexplained syndromes at King's College Medical School, London. It is being paid for by the United States government because no comparable epidemiological study, designed to reveal pat-

terns of illness, has been possible in the US, which lacks a central system of medical record keeping. In the UK, the National Health Service provides the data required for the research.

Over 1,200 men and women who served in the Gulf have reported illnesses including cancer, chronic fatigue and memory loss. Although some are linked to combat stress many who are ill did not fight.

Professor Tony David, a neuropsychiatrist who is leading the study with Professor Simon Wessley, an expert in chronic fatigue syndrome, said the toughest task had been to design a questionnaire that servicemen and women would want to fill in. Payment was not allowed but the researchers will enter all returned questionnaires in a lottery with a £1,000 prize.

Professor David said: "It is important that everyone who receives it fills it in. We have to find out what is going on. Neither the Pentagon nor the Ministry of Defence will control what we publish. We have complete academic freedom – that is written in stone."

The Pentagon, which has spent over \$92m (about £62m) on research in the US, is keen to learn about the experience of soldiers from other countries to see if there are lessons to be learned at home. An independent advisory committee appointed by President Bill Clinton found little evidence that exposure to chemical weapons or pollutants was the cause of health problems and concluded that the stress of combat was probably to blame.

The Medical Research Council is also about to start an MoD funded study of the incidence of abnormalities among children born to servicemen who served in the Gulf.

The message from Oasis's management to hundreds of the band's fans on the Internet could have come straight from the lyrics of "Wonderwall": "by now you should've somehow realised what you gotta do".

That is, remove by yesterday any "unauthorised" pictures, lyrics, text, sound and video clips from their Web sites, as they were warned to do 30 days ago in a mass e-mailing. However, the fans' response



Dress rehearsal: Women at Christie's in London yesterday for the first public viewing of the Princess of Wales's gowns to be sold in New York on 25 June. Photograph: Brian Hales

Oasis Web sites wonder what's the story



Liam Gallagher: Net reaction

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

The message from Oasis's management to hundreds of the band's fans on the Internet could have come straight from the lyrics of "Wonderwall": "by now you should've somehow realised what you gotta do".

That is, remove by yesterday any "unauthorised" pictures, lyrics, text, sound and video clips from their Web sites, as they were warned to do 30 days ago in a mass e-mailing.

However, the fans' response

has resembled that of Liam Gallagher facing a horde of photographers: the cyberspatial equivalent of a Vsign. As "Wonderwall" also suggests: "today is gonna be the day that they're gonna throw it back to you."

Yesterday was the deadline for making changes to the Web sites, according to the message sent out at the end of April by Oasis's management company, Ignition, hundreds of owners of Web sites hymning the praises of Oasis. For those who did not, "failure to comply with the law will ultimately result in legal action."

But the result could be embarrassing for Ignition. Many of the sites have refused to remove the songs, video clips, lyrics and images, despite the threats.

However, it is unclear whether any prosecution under the Copyright Act would be successful. Short audio or video clips, and photographs, and extracts of lyrics, are allowed under existing "fair use" provisions of copyright law.

Oasis's move has succeeded though in annoying a number of Oasis fans on the Internet. "These fans who write

Web sites are the biggest fans and probably buy every CD or whatever that comes out," wrote one. "By doing this you risk alienating fans, rather than appeasing them."

There are more than 250 Oasis sites on the Internet, with varying levels of sophistication. But there are no signs that they are eager to comply with the warning, which also carried the names of Creation Records and Sony Records, which issue the band's recordings.

One site, run by Jack Martin in the United States, has written back to Ignition insisting that all the materials on his site are justifiable under the "fair use" clauses. His site shows hundreds of messages from other Internet users and Oasis fans supporting his stand. "I don't feel that this matter is something that Ignition is too keen on pursuing, especially after the response they've gotten from webmasters and the media," he said on Monday. Many other sites show no signs of having changed: music and audio clips, and lyrics abound. None credit its Ignition or Oasis.

THE DIRECT LINE SAVINGS CHALLENGE

Question:
Can your bank or building society match our savings rates?

Answer:
See below.

	£1- £4,999	£5,000- £9,999	£10,000- £24,999	£25,000- £49,999	£50,000- £99,999	£100,000+
Direct Line Instant Access Account	4.75%	5.25%	5.85%	6.00%	6.25%	6.35%
Halifax Solid Gold (30 Day Notice)	3.00% [†]	3.25%	4.00%	4.50%	4.60%	4.60%
Woolwich Premier 90 (90 Day Notice)	N/A	4.60%	4.00%	4.80%	5.10%	5.90% ^{††}
Nationwide Capitalbuilder 90 Day	4.00% [†]	4.30%	4.50%	4.80%	5.10%	5.10%
TSB 60 Day (60 Day Notice)	3.00% [†]	3.25%	4.30%	4.75%	5.00%	5.00%

All rates are gross*, based on annual payment of interest and correct at 28th May 1997. Source: Moneyfacts.

*Rate effective from £50. ^{††}Rate effective from £200,000.

- As the table shows, the answer seems to be 'no'.
- Our savings rates were higher anyway, now we've raised them again.
- And with Direct Line you get instant access to your money too.
- The more savings you have the higher our rates get.
- You can pool your savings with family or friends for even higher returns.
- Call Direct Line, you'll find we're more than a match for the banks and building societies.

0181 667 1121

0161 833 1121

0141 221 1121

GLASGOW

CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday. Please quote ref. IND82

www.directline.co.uk

Savings are provided by Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH, which is a member of the Deposit Protection Scheme established under the Banking Act 1987 (as amended). Payments under the scheme are limited to 90% of a depositor's total deposits subject to any one depositor of £18,000 (or ECU 20,000 if greater). Further details of the Scheme are available on request. *The gross rate is the rate paid without the deduction of income tax. All rates shown are subject to variation. For your added security telephone calls may be recorded and the recording kept. We may also monitor telephone calls with the aim of improving our service to you. Direct Line and the red telephone on wheels are the trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc and used with its permission.



DIRECT LINE

SAVINGS

The Right Service

Because our customers dictate the levels of service and support, we provide you with the peace of mind that is second to none.

Our friendly, highly trained team are on hand whenever you need them to answer your questions and provide advice.

MJN Offers End 28th June



MJN 166M

£1256.08
inc VAT

£1069 Plus VAT

MJN 233M

£1643.83
inc VAT

£1399 Plus VAT

MJN 233-2

£1878.83
inc VAT

£1599 Plus VAT

MJN 266-2

£2701.33
inc VAT

£2299 Plus VAT

Features

- Intel 166MHz Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology
- 32Mb EDO RAM
- 16 Max CD-ROM drive
- 33.5 V34+ voice modem
- 2.1Gb hard disk
- 15" SVGA 0.28dp screen
- 256K pipeline burst cache
- Fast 64-bit graphics using 2Mb system RAM
- 16-bit stereo sound, joystick and premium speakers

MJN 200M

- As above but with Intel Pentium 200MHz processor with MMX technology
- 64Mb EDO RAM
- 24 Max CD-ROM drive, 24 Max B&W graphics, PC-TV with Teletext, video capture, SoundBlaster 64 AWE, executive subwoofer system and 17" screen
- £1,385.33 inc. VAT (£1,215 Plus VAT)
- Model: 505

Features

- Intel 233MHz Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology
- 512K pipeline burst cache
- Intel ATX motherboard with DM
- 32Mb EDO RAM
- 3.2Gb EIDE hard disk
- 33.6 V34+ voice modem
- 15" SVGA 0.28dp screen (17" optional)
- ATI Rage II 3D 4Mb Graphics
- SoundBlaster 32 hardware wavetable sound card, joystick and premium speakers

MJN 233 Exec

- As above but with 64Mb EDO RAM, 6.4Gb hard disk, 24 Max B&W graphics, PC-TV with Teletext, video capture, SoundBlaster 64 AWE, executive subwoofer system and 17" screen
- £2,465.33 inc. VAT (£2,095 Plus VAT)
- Model: 508

Features

- Intel Pentium® II 266MHz processor with MMX technology
- 512K pipeline burst cache
- Intel ATX motherboard with DM
- 64Mb EDO RAM
- 6.4Gb EIDE hard disk
- 24 Max CD-ROM drive
- 17" SVGA 0.28dp screen
- ATI Rage II 3D graphics with 4Mb video RAM
- 33.6 V34+ voice modem
- Yamaha high quality 3D stereo sound with software wavetable, premium speaker system and PC joystick

Features

- Intel Pentium® II 266MHz processor with MMX technology
- 512K pipeline burst cache
- Intel ATX motherboard with DM
- 64Mb EDO RAM
- 6.4Gb EIDE hard disk
- 24 Max CD-ROM drive
- 17" SVGA 0.28dp screen
- ATI Rage II 3D graphics with 4Mb video RAM
- 33.6 V34+ voice modem
- Yamaha high quality 3D stereo sound with software wavetable, premium speaker system and PC joystick

MJN 266-2

- As above with Teletext and video capture
- Executive speaker system with subwoofer (not shown) and PC joystick

£2,701.33 inc. VAT

£2,299 Plus VAT

Model: 513

All Models Include

Midi tower case, (new look) midi tower on Pentium II systems - not shown), 3.5" floppy drive, PS/2 mouse, 105 keyboard, software, 16Mb, mouse port, 2 fast serial ports, parallel port, game port, Microsoft Windows 95 and massive software bundle.

Printer Option

Epson Stylus color 200 1200 X 1200 dpi inkjet printer

£2,185.83 inc. VAT (£1,915 Plus VAT)

15" or 17" Upgrade £225 inc. VAT extra (£200 Plus VAT)

MJN - The Award Winning PC Manufacturer

Included Software

Lotus SmartSuite 97, over 10 leading CD titles plus the very best educational, home and leisure software with an RRP over £1000.



MJN Technology Limited, Granite House, Blackburn Rd, Smethwick, B61 2TG. Tel 01282 777 555

Telephone Sales Lines Are Open Mon - Fri 8.30am - 7.00pm, Sat 9.00am - 5.00pm

MJN Technology Limited, Granite House, Blackburn Rd, Smethwick, B61 2TG. Tel 01282 777 555

Telephone Sales Lines Are Open Mon - Fri 8.30am - 7.00pm, Sat 9.00am - 5.00pm

MJN Technology Limited, Granite House, Blackburn Rd, Smethwick, B61 2TG. Tel 01282 777 555

Telephone Sales Lines Are Open Mon - Fri 8.30am - 7.00pm, Sat 9.00am - 5.00pm

MJN Technology Limited, Granite House, Blackburn Rd, Smethwick, B61 2TG. Tel 01282 777 555

Telephone Sales Lines Are Open Mon - Fri 8.30am - 7.00pm, Sat 9.00am - 5

هذا من الأصل

Basically, I had two reasons

for choosing the Mercedes over the other £20,000 cars:

Mark (4) and Sammie (6 months).



You knew, as you parted with £19,890 for your Mercedes C-class, that you were making an investment in security.

And now, with the baby dozing and the boy chattering away, and that blind bend ahead and the shadows playing tricks with your eyes, you're glad of the sense of certainty a Mercedes brings.

Glad of the un-matched build quality, the driver and passenger airbags, the fourth generation ABS.

And then...

Nothing. The bend is suddenly behind you, the shadows recede and as the sun illuminates the paintwork, you squeeze gently down to enjoy the silent surge along the open, shimmering tarmac.

And you realise, just then, that there was a third reason for choosing the Mercedes over all those other cars: Sarah (31 next month but looks younger).



C-class

CAR FEATURED: MERCEDES-BENZ C180 CLASSIC. £19,890 ON THE ROAD (INCLUDING DELIVERY, 12 MONTHS ROAD FUND LICENCE, NUMBER PLATES AND A FULL TANK OF FUEL). ALL PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. FOR DETAILS TELEPHONE 0171 535 3555 EXT 1422. www.mercedes-benz.co.uk

story

MIN 262
2701
2299

77555

Clarke-Hague dream ticket?



Like minds: William Hague with Lord Parkinson yesterday after the former Cabinet minister announced he would be supporting him in the leadership election. Photograph: John Voss

Former Chancellor set to offer rival leading role in return for support

Anthony Bevins
and Fran Abrams

A "dream ticket" of Kenneth Clarke and William Hague is being talked of by supporters of the two contenders for the Conservative leadership.

It is increasingly being recognised at Westminster that at 36, Mr Hague could well be too young to lead old-hands like Mr Clarke, Michael Howard, Peter Lilley and John Redwood in a united shadow cabinet.

Although no talks have taken place, supporters of the two candidates for the first-round ballot on 10 June told *The Independent* yesterday that an alliance would help them both if the result of the first round was inconclusive.

The former Chancellor of the Exchequer is expected to come top of the ballot in the six-strong field that is expected next Tuesday, but he could find it difficult to win without the help of the centre-ground Mr Hague.

While no candidate can deliver his support for another, second-round candidate, en bloc, an endorsement could mobilise solid support for a leading contender.

It is increasingly being recognised at Westminster that at 36, Mr Hague could well be too young to lead old-hands like Mr Clarke, Michael Howard, Peter Lilley and John Redwood in a united shadow cabinet.

But if he was assured of a leading role in a Clarke team, possibly as deputy leader with responsibility for party organisation, he could prepare himself for an eventual succession to Mr Clarke, who is 57 next month.

Senior sources in the Clarke and Hague camps said yesterday that there could be no talks

until after the results of the first round had been declared on Tuesday evening. But quick moves might be required in advance of the second-round ballot one week later, on 17 June.

There were strong rumours in Westminster yesterday – no doubt inspired by Clarke supporters – that if the party leadership was taken by a right-winger there could be a significant number of defections from the parliamentary party.

On the right-wing, it was said again yesterday by a leading Howard supporter that his man was running in second-place to Mr Clarke. But it was also conceded that if he was beaten by Mr Lilley, then he would be left with no choice but

to move behind him as the leading challenger to Mr Clarke.

However, the right-wing is by no means united. One of Mr Redwood's leading supporters told *The Independent* that Mr Lilley and Mr Hague had "no conviction, no passion, no guts and no brains."

He was particularly scathing about the "Mandelsonian holiness" of Mr Hague, but his comments on Mr Lilley went into the regions of fibel.

If that loathing is common in the Redwood camp, it is possible that Mr Clarke could pick up support from that surprising quarter in the second and third rounds of the contest, although the same, well-informed source thought it rather more likely

that the man who finally fought Mr Clarke would emerge as eventual winner.

Yesterday, with just a week to go, John Major said he would not give public support to any of the two runners. Mr Hague announced that he had won the backing of the former Cabinet minister Lord Parkinson, while Mr Redwood set out his plans on public spending.

Mr Major defended his decision to step down immediately after the general election as leader rather than waiting until the party had had time to consider its future.

"I think the sooner we can prepare, the sooner we have a new leader and the sooner we can then turn all our attentions to the shortcomings of the new

Government where we perceive there to be shortcomings, the better," he said.

Mr Redwood said: "We must both be the party of better schools and hospitals and the party of lower taxation.

"We can do it if we recommend sensible changes in the priorities in the budget."

He called for spending cuts of £3bn to pay for extra money for schools, the National Health Service and help for small businesses.

Savings could be made by scrapping plans to ban handguns, thus cutting compensation costs, by abolishing Urban Development Corporations, but ending regional government offices and freezing civil service recruitment, he said.

DAVID
Aaronovitch

Indignant Howard argues for fair play

Michael Howard reached into his rhetorical bag, rummaged around in the pocket marked "outrage", and drew out a fistful of epithets and adjectives denoting shock, sadness, affront and insulted innocence.

The lot opposite were desecrating a "delicate system of checks and balances that has grown up over centuries", trampling over the "virtues of compromise and fair play", systematically "stifling discussion", "displaying contempt for decency and convention", "running contrary to the genius of the country", and planning a "tectonic change in how this nation is governed". Their behaviour was reminiscent of that of Robespierre, and "in the annals of this House there can be few who have fallen so far short" of their responsibilities as had the Leader of the House, Anne Taylor. In the public gallery there were shudders. But several schoolboys smiled wickedly. "Indecent and unconventional. Sounds like my kinda government!"

To ragged Tory cheers, a tired but happy Mr Howard slumped back on to the bench that he shared with leadership rival William Hague. Hague, dressed in identical suit, pinkish shirt and red and blue-spotted tie sportingly saluted Howard's speech. "Hear, hear!" he said very, very quietly.

Perhaps his mind, like ours, had ranged back over the years. He may have recalled how much Margaret Thatcher had loved compromise and courted convention, or how the "checks and balances" of local government and voluntary associations (like trades unions) had been attended to. So he may have concluded that listening to Mr Howard complain about his treatment was like hearing cries of "rape" and "murder!" coming from death row at Alcatraz on hair-clipping day.

The former Home Secretary's target was, of course, the tyrannical new Labour government which – unsated by its tampering with the million-year-old tradition of two 15-minute Prime Minister's Questions – was now imposing a guillotine on the discussion of the Bill to hold referendums in Scotland and Wales. But there was something not quite right about his indignation. First, only 40 or so Tories had turned up to witness the fightback against Stalinist tyranny. Second, when asked by Labour's John Home Robertson how many of his Folkestone constituents had written to him about Scottish devolution, Mr Howard replied (after careful thought and a passing, awful vision of Anna Widcombe) that he had mentioned the issue in his election campaign. In other words, none.

Tam Dalyell rose from his green cushion, and the House immediately fell silent. Was he about to put the boot into his own party; to warn Cassandra-style against hubris? Nope. Mad Tam had no sympathy with the Opposition, who had allowed the order paper to be "cheepened by the fluff of frivolous amendments".

I looked, and Tam was right. There were more than 200 amendments; amendments such as that put down by Euro-obsessive Bill Cash, wishing to insert in the Bill references to the Succession to the Crown Act 1707, the Princess Sophia's Precedence Act of 1711, the Wales Act of 1535 and several more. Tabled by anyone other than Cash this was an obvious filibuster. Tabled by Cash you couldn't be sure that it wasn't just sad. But then Tam raised his own question. On the government frontbench those with long memories recalled how – nearly two decades before – Tam's Lothian question had scuppered the last, glorious Labour government. But that was then and this is now; Tam instead asked the Gary McAllister question. And that is – as everyone knows – a much easier question to answer.

Health insurance

Call Prime Health and cover all your children for the price of one.

Unlike some other health plans, with Primecare you pay the same premium however many children you have.

In addition Primecare gives you and your family comprehensive cover, with no financial limits on surgeons' and anaesthetists' fees. Which could be very important to you one day. And to your children.

Prime Health
A member of the Standard Life Group

Call 0800 77 99 55 now, or fill in the coupon for a no-obligation quote.

Title	First name	Surname
Address		
Postcode		
Phone (0156 204 845)	Evening	
Date of birth of the oldest person requiring cover		
<input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Single parent family		
Renewal date of current insurance (if applicable)		
If you'd prefer a representative to visit please tick box <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please post to (no stamp required) Prime Health Limited, FREEPOST, (GI 2192) Golds Hill B71 4BB. http://www.primehealth.co.uk		

M05029

Harman heads team to put women's issues first

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

A new Cabinet sub-committee will put women's issues "at the heart of government". Britain's first Minister for Women announced yesterday. Harriet Harman, who holds the post alongside her role as Secretary of State for Social Security, will chair the committee. Its members will include at least six other female ministers.

Ms Harman has also set up a Women's Unit, based in the Cabinet Office, which will promote women's issues across Whitehall. The unit will be headed by Pauline Barrett, who formerly worked with the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. Anna Coote, deputy director of the Institute for Public Policy Research, has been appointed as part-time special adviser on women.

Last night women's groups welcomed the announcement, but pointed out that the last government had both a Cabinet sub-committee on women and an equality unit. The success of



Harman: Will chair sub-committee on women's issues

the new government would depend on the depth of its commitment, they said.

Among the ministers who will sit on the Cabinet committee will be Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Glenda Jackson, transport minister, Angela Eagle, environment minister, Helen Liddell, economic secretary to the Treasury, and Tessa Jowell, minister for public health.

Both the committee and the unit will try to ensure that government departments work together to address issues affecting women. Among those issues will be child care, family-friendly employment and domestic violence.

The Government is determined to continue to attract support from women, who voted Labour in equal numbers to men for the first time at the general election.

Ms Harman has said that she

will examine all economic and social papers going to Cabinet sub-committees to monitor their impact on women, and lead moves to set up a national child care strategy.

"Women have made great strides in recent years, but there is still much to do. I will ensure that for the first time women's issues are put firmly at the heart of government," she said.

Anna Coote said that under the Conservatives there had been confusion about what women's roles should be. "They didn't really know whether they wanted women to go back to the kitchen or whether women should go out to work. They didn't understand the need to improve the lives of poor women," she said.

A spokeswoman for the Fawcett Society, which campaigns on women's issues, welcomed the announcement. But said the only new measure taken by the Government was the promise to monitor economic and social papers going to Cabinet sub-committees. Any new measures needed resources.

Britain strikes deal to reduce veto on joint EU foreign policy

Sarah Helm
Katherine Butler
Brussels

The Government has struck its first significant deal with its European partners since coming to power by accepting a reduction of the British veto over joint foreign-policy decisions.

Announced by foreign ministers in Luxembourg yesterday, the deal will help smooth the way for completion of the Amsterdam Treaty, due to be signed by heads of government in two weeks.

The move is the latest indication that the new Government will accept greater power-sharing between EU member states than its predecessor. Under the deal significant decisions on foreign policy will be decided by a qualified majority of states.

The draft treaty text presented by the EU Dutch presidency, and now agreed by all 15 EU countries, states that the EU will decide only broad foreign policy strategy by unanimity. The nuts and bolts of how these strategies are implemented on the ground will then be decided by qualified majority.

If Britain does not want to participate in the implementation of a policy, it, for example, if it does not want to send aid to a country or impose sanctions, it could refuse.

However, the objecting state would not be able to stop the others from going ahead. A single government would only be able to veto plans "for important and stated reasons of national policy".

Although the foreign policy

section of the Amsterdam Treaty is now almost finalised, the debate over whether the EU should appoint a senior figure to represent it on the foreign policy stage has still not been resolved.

Britain and France are keen to appoint a weighty political figure to the job, while the other member states want a senior EU functionary.

Britain still has significant differences with its European partners over common EU defense. The Government is objecting to moves by France and Germany to incorporate the Western European Union, the body which co-ordinates European defence, inside the EU.

Meanwhile, Tony Blair's commitment to the European Social Chapter will be put to its first serious test today, when Brussels moves to bring in rules over sex discrimination.

Blair
party
with t

Compensa
for late air

Quick t



For more info
your order call 09

918

web h

Blair rewards party workers with top jobs

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

Many of the key workers who helped Labour to victory have been rewarded with jobs in ministerial offices with most sought-after posts going to outsiders.

Nearly all the special advisers worked previously for the Labour Party or shadow ministers, according to an analysis by *The Independent*. Several have no previous expertise of the subject area of their department because they have followed their previous employer into a different department from the one which they shadowed.

The revelation comes as the row over the alleged politicisation of the Civil Service was seized on by John Major, leader of the Opposition, who told Radio 4's *The World at One* programme: "Mr Blair has been very enthusiastic in the scale of his appointments from the Labour Party into the Government machine. He's appointed far more people in under a

month than we had over an 18 year period. I think it is a mistake. I think many people will be concerned that this is leading towards politicisation of the Civil Service."

However, the increase is relatively small. There are 35 appointments so far in the departments and about half a dozen further appointments are expected compared with 30 under the Tories. The biggest increase is in Downing Street where the number of political advisers has gone up from eight to 18 because Tony Blair has a much bigger policy unit than his predecessor.

Of the 35 departmental advisers, only three did not have some direct connection with the relevant minister or with the Labour Party during the run-up to the election. While some, such as Gordon Brown's and Margaret Beckett's teams, who are mostly economists, have considerable relevant knowledge, others – such as Kate Davies at transport, Joe McCann at health and Andrew Lappin

at the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster – all followed their minister even though they were shadowing a different department.

Most are relatively junior in their twenties or thirties, but a few more senior experts have been brought in such as Norman Warner, a former director of Kent social services, Michael Barber, a former professor of education at the London Institute of Education, and Murray Elder, a long-time Labour Party employee with considerable expertise on the constitution.

Equally, in the policy unit, four out of the ten appointments previously worked for Mr Blair, either when he was leader or when he shadowed home affairs or employment. There is little concern among senior civil servants about the increase in numbers of special advisers because they do not see it as reflecting any major change in policy. One source said: "We were very relieved that they decided not to institute a cabinet type system but have stuck with the existing one."

Compensation claimed for late aircraft order

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

The Ministry of Defence is seeking compensation from the US makers of heavy transport aircraft after the disclosure that delivery of 25 of the C-130 aircraft costing £1.8bn has been delayed by a year.

The C-130 jets, replacing the United Kingdom's ageing fleet of Hercules transport aircraft, were ordered in 1994 and rolled off the tarmac a year later at the US plant of Lockheed, the American makers. But the aircraft stall at low speeds, and there have been problems with the avionics, MoD sources said

yesterday. The MoD is invoking a clause in the contract to seek compensation for the cost of the late delivery.

Aviation experts shrugged off the delay in the development of the C-130 as "one of those things", but late delivery of defence equipment has been a continuing source of concern for the Public Accounts Committee, which is expected to investigate, when it is set up.

John Spellar, the defence minister, told MPs in a written Commons answer: "The programme has not yet met its implementation milestones as a result of development problems and difficulties in meeting

the flight test and certification objectives. These have caused a delay of about one year to initial aircraft deliveries."

The order was placed with the US company in the face of fierce competition from British Aerospace which wanted investment in a new generation of heavy-lift aircraft in a European consortium, codenamed the FLA. The Major administration announced a compromise, in which it would buy the planes, but would also support the development of the FLA on the drawing board. The Government is soon to face a tough choice over whether to go ahead with developing the FLA.



Edged out: The 17th-century 'Maiden' guillotine, Scotland's last, which is now housed in the National Museum of Scotland, in Edinburgh
Photograph: Colin McPherson

Dewar overrides guillotine protests

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, yesterday warned Tory peers against repeating Conservative attempts in the Commons to block the passage of the referendum Bill for Scottish and Welsh devolution.

Michael Howard, the former home secretary, accused the Government of acting in an "arrogant and dismissive way", but Mr Dewar denied trying to bulldoze the Bill through the Commons and attacked the Tories for "an organised attempt to obstruct" the legislation.

The Government's use of the guillotine led to a second day of angry protests by Tory MPs, but John Major hinted that he was using the row to regroup his shattered forces in Parliament, and rebuild the Opposition. As two of the contenders for the Tory leadership, Mr Howard and William Hague, led the attack in the Commons, the former Prime Minister said on BBC Radio 4's *World at One* that a Shadow Cabinet team had been set up to focus the Tory opposition to the referendum.

The group, including Mr Howard, Mr Hague, Michael Heseltine, Annabel Goldie, the chairman of the Scottish Tory Party, and Lord Cranborne, the Shadow Leader of the Lords, was behind many of the 250 Tory amendments which led the Government to impose the guillotine before the committee stage had started.

Tory sources said the group had concentrated on tactics for attacking the devolution plans, and was not involved in policy, which would remain unchanged against the Scottish parliament and Welsh assembly.

Mr Major made it clear the Tories would keep up their opposition. "On no occasion have the Labour Party actually begun to address the serious problems which emerge from their own legislation. They are now going to have to answer them," he said.

Some of the Tory moves were attacked as "frivolous" by Liberal Democrat Scottish spokesman, Jim Wallace, who backed the Government's use of the guillotine. He cited the amendments to hold the Scottish referendum on St Andrew's Day, or that both referendums should be held on Sundays.

The guillotine and Labour's overwhelming majority in the Commons swept aside Tory attempts to include a wrecking threshold in the Scottish referendum, but the battle will resume today before the Bill goes to the Lords.

Mr Dewar promised a White Paper with a Commons vote before the summer recess, followed by the referendums. The main devolution Bill will be pushed through Parliament if the referendums approve the proposals.

Leading article, page 21

Issued by Midland Bank plc. Member HSBC Group

We heard you wanted...

free packs to help you
start your business.



Not everyone knows enough about business practice to get their fantastic idea up and running, so Midland has put together a start-up pack which makes setting up on your own a lot less daunting. It includes a 30 minute video featuring people who successfully launched their own businesses and a booklet which teaches you the basics – like writing your business proposal and calculating your finances. There's also a software package for your PC which helps you work out forecasts and projections.



Call for details
or visit a branch



Midland

The Listening Bank

Call 0345 40 41 42

www.midlandbank.com

For your free business start-up pack, complete in BLOCK CAPITALS and return the coupon to:

Midland Bank plc, FREEPOST SWB 332, Bristol, BS1 6BR

Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss/Other (please specify) Initials Surname

House name/number Street

Town

Postcode

County

or cut the coupon.

Daytime tel no (inc. STD)

Evening tel no (inc. STD)

Do you hold other Midland accounts? Yes No (please tick)

If so please fill in your sort code **40** May we send you information about our products and services in future? Yes No (please tick)

BUF 99

Quick thinking



Once again Viglen is quick off the mark by introducing the Genie 2, a brand new range of powerful PCs featuring the very latest Intel Pentium® II processor. The newly launched Pentium® II processor is the fastest and most powerful PC processor on the market today and makes these Genie 2 systems really fly. The Genie 2 also includes the latest MMX™ technology for enhanced sight, sound and communications capabilities. What's more they all come with full manageability software to reduce the total cost of ownership for the large business. All Viglen PCs are manufactured to the highest possible standards and are totally reliable – a quality recognised by the countless awards won from leading computer journals. And our renowned aftersales telephone support begins the moment you purchase and continues as long as you're a Viglen user. Great thought has been put into the price too with the Viglen Genie 2 starting at just £1531.00 ex. VAT (£1799.00 inc. VAT). So if you want tomorrow's processor with mind blowing performance today at a business minded price look no further than the new Viglen Genie 2.

For more information or to place your order call 0990 39 39 39
9am - 5pm Mondays 9am - 1pm Saturday. Calls charged at National Rate
fax 0181 758 7080
web <http://www.viglen.co.uk>

Viglen Limited, Viglen House, Alperton Lane, Alperton, Middlesex HA8 1DX.

© Viglen Ltd. All rights reserved. Viglen and the Viglen logo are registered trademarks of Viglen Ltd. The trademarks and registered trademarks of other companies mentioned in this document are the property of their respective owners.

COMPUTERS • NETWORKS • SOLUTIONS

GREAT MINDS
THINK VIGLEN

news

Irish election harvests its own sleaze crop



Alan Murdoch

All over the prime grasslands of Tipperary North, farmers were this week sweating in scorching heat, turning lush fields into five-foot high rolls of hay for silage. But for the voters in Ireland's "sleaze" constituency it is the rich harvest one man has already reaped that is the burning issue.

Michael Lowry has been embroiled in controversy since he was forced to resign as transport minister and leave the Fine Gael (FG) party last November amid a financial scandal. To the consternation of government

and public, Mr Lowry may now not only retain his seat but return home at the top of the poll in the three-seat constituency.

On the road from the market town of Roscrea, Mr Lowry's strong hold of Thurles, the confident face of the sports star turned businessman-politician looks out from billboards in the blue and gold colours of Tipperary's Gaelic sports teams. This is not accidental. Mr Lowry, 43, a former hurler at club level, played a decisive part in raising funds to clear £1.2m debts left by rebuilding Thurles' Semple Stadium, the county's

Gaelic Athletic Association ground, home to Tipperary's crack hurling team.

His slogan, "Secure Tipp's Future", reminds voters of public investment in the area secured while Mr Lowry was a TD (MP), then minister. But since news that he was paid for business services with a large house extension worth up to £295,000 with furnishings from the stores magnate Ben Dunne, his former party leader the Taoiseach John Bruton, has been distancing himself from him.

It also emerged that Mr Lowry took advantage of an income tax

amnesty which his party had opposed. Plus, there was the embarrassment of tabloid revelations of a holiday he took in Spain with a female companion.

Then a tribunal investigating Mr Dunne's payments to politicians heard evidence of a sum of £105,000 made to Mr Lowry for legitimate business services that was imaginatively routed through the Isle of Man. Mr Lowry, in a "full" account to the Dail of his dealings with Mr Dunne, had failed to mention this. FG has disowned him as a candidate and he is standing as an independent. A local businessman explains

coduring support for Mr Lowry: "On the tax issue, people here say 'Well, [politicians] are all at it and he was just the one that got caught.' It is a fact that he has done a lot for the area."

Among professional middle classes tending their yachts in the evening sun at the picturesque village of Dromineer beside Lough Derg, there are more doubts, particularly about the tax issue. That cloud over Mr Lowry is likely to boost the chances of Labour's Kaitleen O'Meara becoming the first woman TD here in over 40 years. "I believe I am the right woman in the right

place at the right time," she declares. To target rural votes she has revived the tradition of delivering speeches at village church gates after Sunday mass.

Her confidence is clear when she takes the battle into the heart of Mr Lowry's home base. She gets a sympathetic hearing from working-class women in Kennedy Park. "I think women have to be present when important decisions are being made," she says. Ms O'Meara's strong showing and anti-FF transfers when second preferences from Mr Lowry's surplus are redistributed means that one of the two Fi-

anna Fail candidates, the ex-ministers Michael O'Kennedy and Michael Smith, will probably lose. The women's vote is the wild card in the ballot.

But if the national result goes to the wire, the country may face the possibility of Mr Lowry holding the balance of power. Thurles may back its man through thick and thin, but voters nationally are not so forgiving. A weekend poll for the Dublin *Sunday Independent* found 59 per cent against the present government returning to office if it were only able to secure a majority with his support.

IRA volunteer 'had contact' with Mayhew

An IRA volunteer accused of plotting to bomb electricity supply stations and black out parts of London had contact with the former Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, he told the Old Bailey yesterday.

Gerard Hanratty said he also met the new Secretary, Mo Mowlam, during the early peace process. He told the court he was serving a sentence for IRA activities at the time and had a brief discussion with Ms Mowlam.

He had approved of the ceasefire, but at time went on because frustrated by the "inactivity" of John Major's government, he told the court.

Mr Hanratty said he had remained a member of the IRA after his release and during the peace process. When the ceasefire ended with the Canary Wharf bombing, he felt "sad and shocked," he told the jury.

He said he was called to a meeting by the IRA three months after the ceasefire ended and agreed to go on a mission for them in England. He was shown maps and documentation about power sources, and told the court of a "dry run" to a electricity sub-station in Ire-

land: "The purpose was a dry run for what we were going to do in England."

They put empty wooden boxes on a number of locations outside the station and then disconnected them, he said.

The prosecution alleges Mr Hanratty was part of an IRA active service unit which plotted to blitz electricity sub-stations. But the conspiracy was foiled by a police and security services operation, prosecutor Nigel Sweeney has told the jury.

Seven members of an IRA active service unit were in London within months of the ceasefire ending, he claimed. An eighth was to provide support and find premises in the Birmingham area. The initial targets were six electrical sub-stations: Amersham Main, Elstree, Waltham Cross, Catterbury north, west Weybridge and Rayleigh, the court has heard.

Mr Hanratty, 38, Martin Murphy, 36, Donald Gannan, 34, Patrick Martin, 35, Robert Morrow, 37, Francis Rafferty, 45, John Crawley, 39, and Clive Bramptoo, 36, deny conspiring between 1 January and 16 July last year to cause explosions likely to endanger life or cause serious injury to property.



Role changes: Judith Burke, 33, holding her five-week-old daughter Emily at the triennial Women's Institute General Meeting at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, yesterday. Ms Burke had Emily early by Caesarean so she could attend Brighton and Hove Albion's last football match of the season

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Prairie pop
becomes lea
of the opposi

is covered
by

is not
by

Liberals scrape back in divided Canada

Hugh Winsor
Toronto

Canadians awoke yesterday to a new Parliament, fractured along the regional fault lines of the country. The Liberal government of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien won a narrow majority based on its strength in Ontario and Quebec, but it was almost shut out of Western Canada and took a severe drubbing in Atlantic Canada where resentment over widespread cuts to unemployment insurance and social programmes has resuscitated the labour-affiliated New Democratic Party.

The separatist Bloc Québécois held on to a majority of the 75 seats reserved for Quebec in the 301-seat national parliament but lost its position as official opposition to the Reform Party, led by an uncompromising Preston Manning, whose hard line against any concessions toward Quebec's French-speaking majority boosted his support in Western Canada.

Mr Chrétien paid a stiff price for his party's political opportunism, having called an election



Celebration: Jean Chrétien and his wife Alain greet supporters in Quebec after the Liberal victory yesterday

the Reform Party with 60 seats gains new clout in Parliament, the results amount to a disappointment for Mr Manning personally and for the political ideas he has promoted.

Reform had poured immense resources into the election battle in Ontario, the largest and richest province, which accounts for one third of the total seats in Parliament. But the party lost the one Ontario seat it had, and it also failed to make a breakthrough in rural areas.

An extensive television advertising campaign in which the Reform Party attacked the predominance of Quebec-based politicians in the national unity issue and questioned whether a prime minister from Quebec was capable of negotiating with the Quebec separatists appeared to have backfired.

The result was a more concentrated support in Western Canada. It probably also means checkmate for Reform's ambitions to become a truly national party with an agenda based on reducing the role of central government, a scaling back of social spending, and tax cuts.

Jean Charest, the young and charismatic leader of the Conservative Party was the unheralded hero. He inherited a dispirited shell of a party that had been reduced to two seats in the 1993 election, mainly as a reaction to nine years of government led by former prime minister Brian Mulroney.

Mr Charest has been rebuilding the party and electrified the campaign with his performances in televised leaders' debates. In Quebec, he shook many of the "soft nationalists" out of the separatist camp and was the big factor in Bloc Québécois' decline in seats.

But he added only three seats because the way the votes split among the major parties running in Quebec benefited the Liberals. Similarly in Ontario, the revitalised Conservatives split the right-of-centre vote with the Reform Party, and the Liberals won 99 of the 113 seats.

As a result of all of the fractures and vote splits, the Conservatives came in second only to the Liberals in popular vote, but fifth party in the House of Commons.

Seats (percent of vote):
Liberal Party: 155 (38)
Reform Party: 80 (19)
Bloc Québécois: 44 (11)
New Democratic Party: 21 (11)
Progressive Conservatives: 20 (19)
Others: 1 (2)
Turnout: 65.7 percent

Prairie populist becomes leader of the opposition

Tim Cornwell
Los Angeles

Preston Manning becomes the leader of Canada's official opposition today, with his Reform Party taking an extra six seats to push ahead of the weakened Bloc Québécois.

In small ways – becoming first in the queue to ask parliamentary questions, for example – it will elevate the status of a man who has become the voice of Western discontent. Mr Manning's strategy failed in his election master strategy to push his support east into Ontario, and so undercut the Liberal's majority. While he established that Reform was more than a one-hit wonder, after it emerged from almost nowhere four years ago, its support is now almost exclusively regional.

Mr Manning became a bête noire in the closing weeks of the election when he accused the other parties of pandering to

Quebec by accepting it as a "distinct society" within Canada. But the tactic shored up his support in his Western powerbase in British Columbia and Alberta, where the party's grip on seats had shown signs of slipping.

He had called for a series of

debates on Canadian unity similar to the seven debates on the future of slavery between US President Abraham Lincoln and Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas. They came three years before the American Civil War.

If Quebec left Canada, he said, other provinces should hold their own referendums on independence. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien accused him of appealing to the "dark side", pushing the buttons that divide. The Democratic Party leader, Alexa McDonough, said where Mr Manning's policies "would lead us in this country is straight into a civil war".

Mr Manning, 54, is usually cast as the "prairie populist", raised on an Edmonton dairy farm and steeped in fundamentalist Christian values. Sceptics say most of his childhood was spent in the back of his father's limousine. He was two when his father, Ernest, began 25 years as the Premier of Alberta. The son was undoubtedly raised as a political animal. But while the father ran the local government and was never in opposition, the son ran for office in Ottawa and has never been in power. Elected as Reform leader in 1987, he revamped his image for this election from "geek to sleek".



Preston Manning: Bête noire

YOU COULD PAY LESS.

For affordable private health cover call us NOW.

0800 779 955

Quoting reference M050329

Prime Health

A member of the Standard Life Group

If we're faster and cheaper than the AA or RAC why join them?

Call FREE Today on
0800 001 353

quote ref no. A0121 and your quote or claim number

Green Flag Motoring Assistance

WE LEAVE EVERYONE STANDING BUT YOU

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER GIRO CURRENT ACCOUNT
£20 CHALLENGE
Open a Current Account now and you'll get £20 worth of Marks & Spencer gift vouchers



£20 to spend at Marks & Spencer

Bank the way you want when you want

It's a simple challenge. You can get £20 worth of Marks & Spencer gift vouchers when you open an Alliance & Leicester Giro Current Account with £200* before 15 August 1997. We'll send your vouchers to you – and you'll enjoy all these benefits:

- Bank at almost 20,000 Post Offices.
- Bank by telephone, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Withdraw cash at almost 12,000 LINK machines.
- Debit, cash and cheque guarantee cards.
(Subject to status.)
- Bank by post.

To qualify for your £20 worth of vouchers, request your application form today. Call us free, 24 hours a day, or complete and return the coupon below.

Call FREE today 0800 41 22 14

Quote ref: S49

Track down an Alliance & Leicester Giro Current Account today

Please send me full details of the Alliance & Leicester Giro Current Account, including information on how to open an account, an application form and my claim form for £20 worth of Marks & Spencer gift vouchers.

Ref: S49

Send to: Alliance & Leicester Giro, FREEPOST CV2217, Stratford Upon Avon, CV37 9BR. (No stamp needed.) Please do not send any money with this coupon.

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other (Please state)

Initials

Surname

Address

Home Tel. No. (including STD code)

Postcode

Signature

Date of Birth / /

From time to time we may send you information on Alliance & Leicester Giro products and services. If you do not wish to receive further communications from Alliance & Leicester Giro, please tick here.

High Street banking at your local Post Office



GIRO
Personal Banking

* Offer is valid only when you phone the above number or send off this coupon for an application form. Application forms acquired from Post Offices are not valid for this offer. Once your account has been opened and funded with at least £200, return the claim form before 15 August 1997, and £20 worth of Marks & Spencer gift vouchers will be sent to you. Only one payment of £20 worth of vouchers will be made per person. Joint accounts will only qualify for one payment of vouchers. Applicants for an Alliance & Leicester Giro Current Account must be aged 15 or over. All applications are subject to status. Delta Card and £50 cheque guarantee card are only available if aged 18 or over (subject to status). For security and training purposes telephone calls between you and the Alliance & Leicester or its subsidiaries may be recorded or monitored. Alliance & Leicester Giro is the business name of Alliance & Leicester plc, Registered Office: 49 Park Lane, London W1Y 4EQ, at which address service of all documents may be made and will be effective. Company No: 3263713, Registered in England. Authorised as a bank pursuant to the Banking Act 1987. Member of the British Bankers Association.

California arrests over chip take-away

Tim Cornwell
Los Angeles

Seventeen suspects have been indicted for armed robbery in connection with America's biggest known theft of computer chips, a haul more valuable than guns, heroin or gold. California prosecutors linked the suspects to Asian organised crime gangs, who have been blamed for masterminding a spate of US raids.

The 17 were charged with robbing Centon Electronics in Irvine, California, east of Los Angeles, known as one of the safest cities in America. They escaped with a haul of computer chips and motherboards that was originally valued at \$5 million, but later upgraded to double that sum. It was believed to hold the record as the biggest such robbery in the US, a spokesman for Nora Manella, the US Attorney for the central district of California, said.

Two of the suspects were ethnic Chinese, one Cambodian and fourteen of Vietnamese origin. "All are linked to Asian street gangs, or larger organised crime enterprises," the spokesman said. But there was no indication that the robbery had been ordered by crime syndicates outside the country, as has been suggested in other cases.

About a dozen young men took part in the late evening raid in May 1995, witnesses said, arriving at the door of Centon Electronics smartly dressed in sport coats and ties, in a rental truck and two cars. They forced their way inside at gun point, and forced employees to lie face down on the ground. No-one was hurt.

They carried off boxes of computer chips varying from one to 30 megabytes. With the chips valued at the time at up to \$1,200 a piece, they were

worth more than gold by weight. Since the raid, 53 others, as well as these 17, have been arrested on suspicion of having some kind of connection with the raid.

Most of the chip robberies have taken place in Silicon Valley, to the north, where being held up at gunpoint became a hazard of life for some executives. A joint task force from Washington, Oregon and California, the three West Coast states, was set up to break the silicon trade.

Stolen electronic components enter what is called a "grey market". Manufacturers chasing chips in short supply turn to independent middle men with few questions asked. Companies in both Britain and the US have been targeted.

When the phenomenon first raised its head, firms were often reluctant to release details of their losses, and many were suspected of being inside jobs.

But as Asian gangsters appeared to make the crime their specialty, the US computer industry, allied with the FBI and big insurers, went on the offensive. Firms pooled intelligence and marked serial numbers on the most valuable chips.

In Silicon Valley, more than 500 federal and local law officers took part in a dawn raid last year dubbed Operation West Chips that rounded up more than 50 people, mostly Vietnamese immigrants. Last year 24 suspects in the Centon raid were indicted in San Francisco, and another 20 in San Jose, the capital of Silicon Valley. A further nine suspects were indicted earlier this year in Portland, Oregon.

Eleven of the 17 named in Monday's indictment were also charged in connection with a second robbery, in which \$400,000 worth of chips were taken.



A water slide at a northern California amusement park collapsed on Monday, injuring at least 31 people, many of them teenagers on a high school graduation trip, Reuter reports. Six suffered life-threatening injuries when part of the 40-foot tall slide collapsed at Waterworld USA, in Concord, about 30 miles north-east of San Francisco. Witnesses said people came crashing down when the slide collapsed, turning a pool of water red with blood. Photograph: Reuter

Advertisement

WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT

Senior US officer retires over adultery allegations

Concern is rising that the issue will cut a swathe through America's military

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

As a new attitude of "zero tolerance" towards sexual misconduct sweeps the US military, the commander of a Maryland army training centre that has seen a spate of sexual assault cases is to retire early after admitting to an extra-marital affair. Major-General John Longhouser, a graduate of the elite West Point military academy, a much-decorated Vietnam veteran and a married man, will retire as head of the Aberdeen Proving Ground with reduced pension privileges after his affair was reported to a military hot-line.

The disclosure about Gen Longhouser comes barely a week after the resignation from the US air force of Kelly Flinn, the first female B-52 bomber pilot, who narrowly avoided court martial for adultery and disobedience. Ms Flinn's lawyer had claimed that the military was guilty of double standards and said he had names of senior officers whose adultery had gone unpunished.

The retirement of the commander is the latest sign that a toughening of discipline relating to sexual relations in the military could cause the early departure of some very senior officers. At the end of last week, just as 26 year old Ms Flinn was packing her belongings to leave the air force for good, three separate cases came to light involving senior members of the US armed forces.

One concerns the top legal officer of the US armed forces, William Coleman, the second a two-star Admiral, R.M. Mitchell, who supervises the navy's supply system: both are accused of harassing female subordinates. The third is that of Brigadier-General Stephen Xenakis, head of army medical operations in the south-east

command, who is accused of an improper relationship with a civilian nurse. Both Mr Coleman and Admiral Mitchell have denied the accusations against them, but have been forbidden to comment until the investigations are complete. Their feelings were summed up by Mr Coleman who said: "I'm not at liberty to comment; I'd love to, though."

The case of Kelly Flinn, who admitted having an affair with a married civilian, lying about it and disobeying an order to break it off, became a national cause celebre and brought claims that men in the forces tended to be punished less severely than women, if at all, for sexual dalliances, while senior officers tended to be treated more leniently still.

The chief of staff of the air force, in remarks that were widely endorsed, denied that she had been severely treated, saying that it was unthinkable to have a pilot who disobeyed orders flying a plane capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

After Ms Flinn agreed to accept a general discharge in lieu of court martial, however, newspaper columns and radio talkshows were immediately filled with complaints about individuals, including high-ranking officers - unnamed - whose sexual escapades had gone unremarked and unpunished.

The current mood in the military is such that every allegation of sexual misconduct of whatever kind is likely to be followed up, and the result risks cutting a swathe through the US officer corps. As one Pentagon official was quoted as saying in relation to the retirement of Gen Longhouser: "Where does this end? It's terrible that it's come to the point where a distinguished soldier like Gen Longhouser has his career ended by something like this... Does this make any sense?"

Americans seek head of public enemy number one

Mary Dejevsky

An atmosphere of public vengeance reminiscent of the lynch mob will surround the reconvicting of the court in Denver, Colorado, today for the sentence hearing of Timothy McVeigh. From relatives of his victims to the over-excited self-righteousness of the American media, the message is unambiguous: show no mercy.

The man whose truck bomb killed 168 people and destroyed much of the Oklahoma City federal building on 19 April 1995, has become the vanquished public enemy number one, worthy of nothing except the electric chair. From the moment that the verdict on McVeigh - guilty on all 11 counts, from conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction to first-degree murder - was announced on Monday afternoon, there was an immediate, and distasteful, show of euphoria.

Relatives of some of the victims, waiting outside the Denver courthouse, jumped for joy, shouting their delight. "Yes, yes," shouted one man punching his fist in the air, while the mother of one victim said: "I want the death penalty. An eye for an eye. You don't take lives and get to keep your own."

The prosecution layers were cheered as they left the court-

house, whereas McVeigh's house, whereas McVeigh's was hoisted and whistled. The media networks went into overdrive. Every news programme, talk show, discussion, replaced its scheduled topic with the McVeigh verdict. And the direction was the same: the sooner this arch-felon is executed, the better.

The sheer scale of the killing and destruction in Oklahoma City help to explain the extra-



McVeigh: Patriot with a cause

ordinary attention and high emotions that accompanied this trial, as do the live television coverage of the gruesome aftermath of the bombing and the emblematic picture of a state trooper carrying a dead child from the wreckage that was beamed around the world. There was much pent-up anger

and sorrow to be released. But there were other factors, too. For the first time in living memory, America had to deal with a successful act of mass terrorism committed by one of her own: a white, all-American boy, who served his country in war, and professed to patriotism.

America has had presidents assassinated, it had the New York Trade Center bombing, which was attributed to Middle Eastern terrorists, but rarely has it had civilians killed, en masse and deliberately, by a fellow countryman.

What is more, McVeigh was not a random killer. He was a patriot, however distorted, and he had a cause: the destruction of the state. One of the arguments his counsel is expected to use in mitigation is that he was outraged by the killings of militia members at Waco in Texas the previous year, and believed that he was avenging their deaths. Waco, for him, was evidence that the state was corrupt.

This is a feeling of hostility and alienation not unknown to soldiers returned from an unpopular war and one that can foster revolt. It is shared by the dozens of unofficial militia groups dotted around the United States. McVeigh himself was said during the trial to have planned that his act would trigger a nationwide revolt.

However, unrealistic this ambition, it characterises his crime as a conscious act of rebellion, not - as would be more comforting for America to believe - a random act by a deranged individual.

There was another, more positive reason why this trial attracted the avid attention and aroused the emotions it did. It was the first big trial of national interest since the trial of OJ Simpson.

In many ways, it turned out to be an honourable opposite of that trial. Already, it is being hailed as a model of how the American judicial system ought to work, starting from the decision to hold it elsewhere than Oklahoma City, to the care with which the jury weighed the evidence. The proceedings took only five weeks: there were few side arguments and challenges. There was none of the media circus that attended the OJ Simpson trial.

But, as the response to the verdict so clearly illustrated, the comparison of the two trials is not quite valid. The OJ Simpson trial divided America along the particularly sensitive line of race. The trial of Timothy McVeigh, may have put America back together again, but the simplistic cry for vengeance it provoked was not entirely to its credit.

Britons airlifted to safety

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

British diplomats who have manned the High Commission in Sierra Leone since a coup plunged the country back into anarchy 10 days ago were yesterday evacuated by US Marines in the final airlift out of Freetown, capital of the chaotic West African state.

A spokesman aboard the assault ship USS *Kearsarge* said the evacuation was complete. About 1,200 people were airlifted from the assembly point in the Cape Sierra hotel in Freetown. The Foreign Office

said at least 160 Britons were among them, and they hoped all the Britons were now out.

There will be no further evacuation, the Foreign Office warned, remaining Westerners yesterday morning. "The British High Commission Staff will leave Freetown with this evacuation. All British and American nationals who think it is safe to do so should make their way to the Cape Sierra hotel as soon as possible."

The USS *Kearsarge*, which was initially sent to watch western and central Africa as Laurent Kabila's forces pressed westwards through Zaire last month,

returned to Freetown yesterday. On Friday, 800 foreigners were airlifted to the carrier by helicopter. After dropping them in Conakry, in neighbouring Guinea, the ship reappeared off Freetown yesterday morning for the final airlift.

Acting Major Lincoln Jopp, 28, of the Scots Guards, was hit by shrapnel from a rocket-propelled grenade in the Mammy Yoko hotel complex on Monday. Sierra Leone rebels had been exchanging fire with Nigerian troops who are part of a West African peace-keeping force. Major Jopp and Peter Penfold, the High Commission

and others, were among the Britons taken aboard the *Kearsarge* by helicopter yesterday.

At least 10 people were taken aboard the helicopters on stretchers, including one who was on drips.

The Mammy Yoko was used as the assembly point for the previous evacuation. But it became untenable after the 50 Nigerian soldiers guarding it came under attack from rebels.

Before dawn yesterday the remaining Westerners made the 15-minute walk in darkness to the Cape Sierra, which an MoD spokesman described as a "quieter hotel".

Hong Kong  handover

Class of '97 put careers before politics

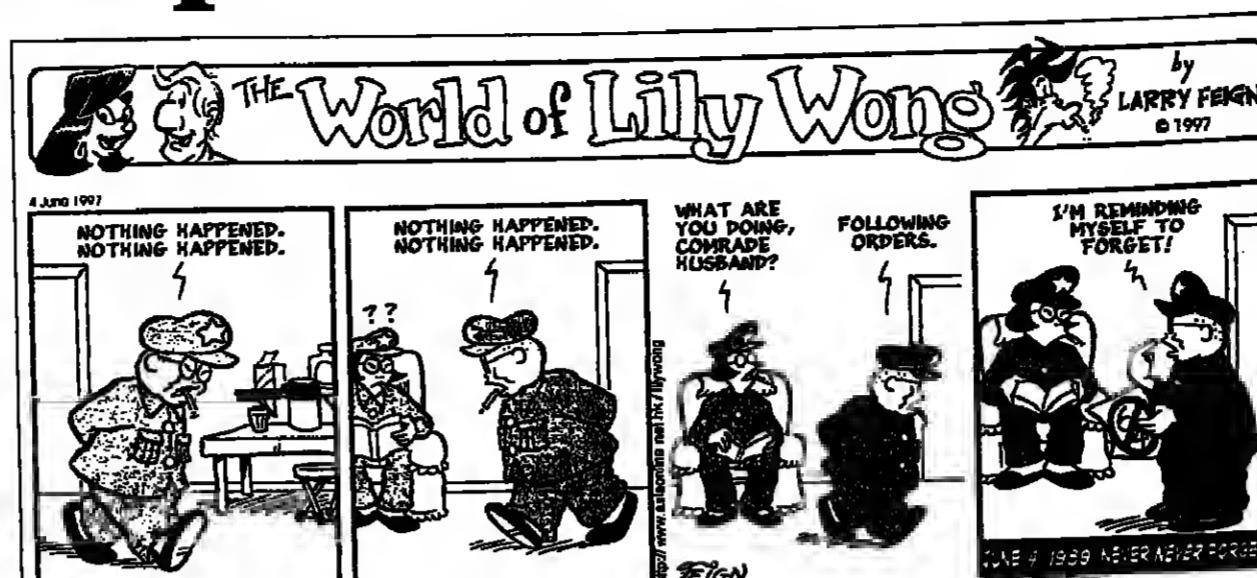
Teresa Poole
Peking

Eight years since the tanks rolled in and crushed the pro-democracy protests on 4 June 1989, groups of students can again be seen in Tiananmen Square - only this time they are part of a wave of patriotism which is sweeping China in the run-up to the return of Hong Kong. Under the watchful eye of the police, classes of students and schoolchildren line up to have their photographs taken in front of the electronic countdown clock at the side of the square, before going into this month's Hong Kong exhibition at the adjacent Museum of the Revolution: "Wash away 100 years of humiliation, happily celebrate the return of Hong Kong", reads the banner over the entrance.

The surge of Chinese nationalism is almost tangible as 30 June approaches, yet the government has nevertheless left nothing to chance for today's unmentionable anniversary. By

yesterday morning, more than a dozen public security vehicles were parked along one side of Tiananmen Square and others in the centre, while pick-up trucks and a fire engine stood by just in case. Despite unusually rainy weather, security was much higher around the square than last year. This is the first anniversary of the brutal crackdown since the death of Deng Xiaoping in February and, with just 27 days to go before the Hong Kong handover, the government wants no unpleasant surprises.

The question, as ever, is who is the Chinese government so scared of? Not China's best-known dissidents, all of whom are in jail. Not the hundreds of ordinary people - Amnesty International has a list of more than 300 - who remain in prison for their activities in 1989; their relatives have learned that it is prudent to keep quiet. Not the families of some of those killed in 1989, who once again this year have petitioned the National People's Congress for



an inquiry into the shootings; they will be ignored once again. And probably not today's students, for whom burgeoning career and overseas study opportunities now take priority over any doomed attempt at

political agitation. The younger generation in China are precisely those who will benefit most from the country's rapid economic development over the past eight years, provided they keep their heads down.

has little experience of dealing with such terrorism.

The people most likely to stage any sort of public demonstration nowadays are the urban unemployed, a phenomenon which did not really exist back in 1989. A vice prime minister, Wu Bangguo, said this week that by the end of March there were more than 9 million unemployed urban workers in China, and nearly 11 million more who had not been paid or only partly paid. Nearly half of China's state-owned enterprises are losing money.

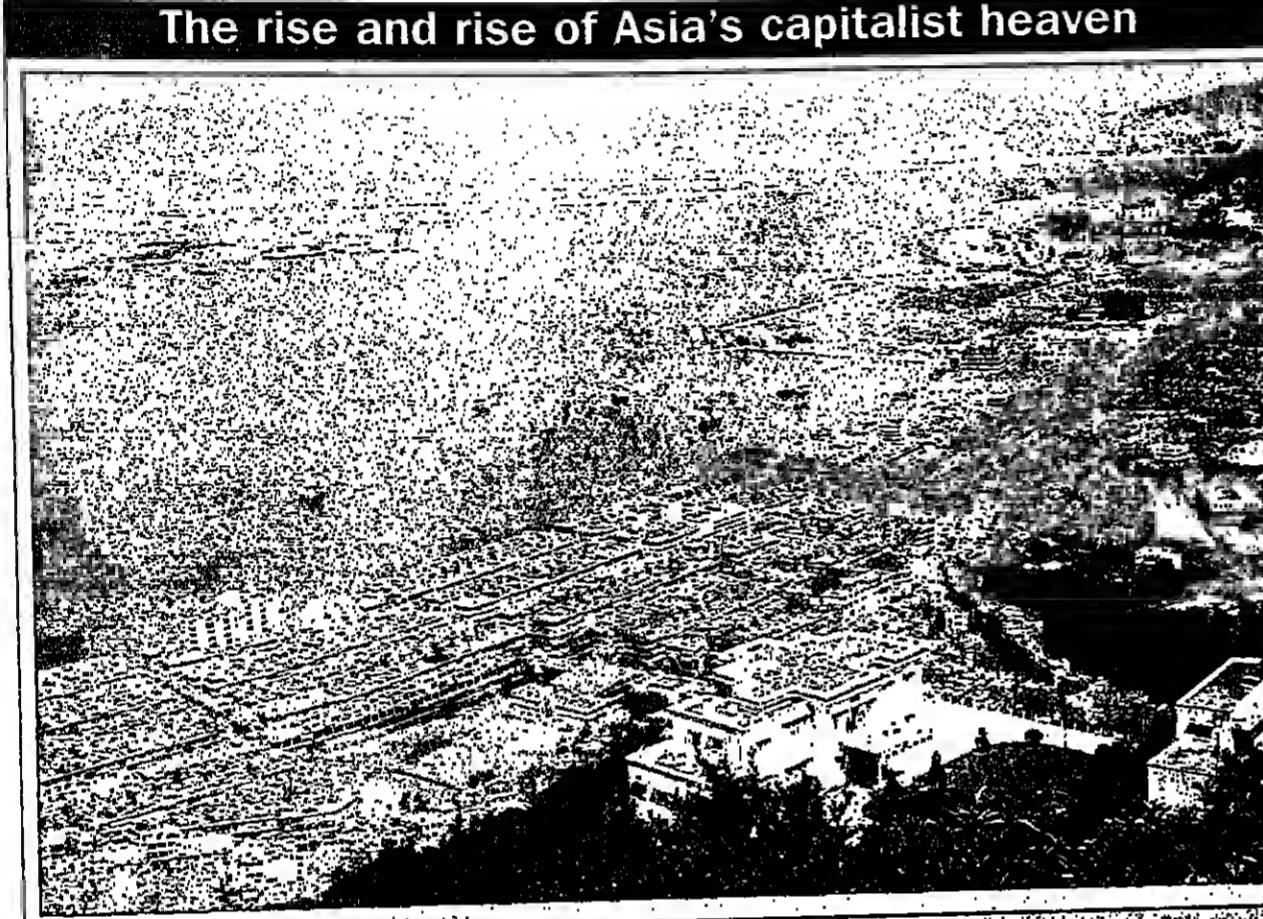
Social stability is thus the Chinese government's priority, and Amnesty International's call this week for a reassessment of the 1989 crackdown as something other than a "counter-revolutionary" protest looks overly optimistic.

The only isolated example of jail sentences being reviewed has been in the north-east province of Jilin, where a court last week quashed the conviction of four dissidents for organising a "counter-revolutionary" clique in 1989.

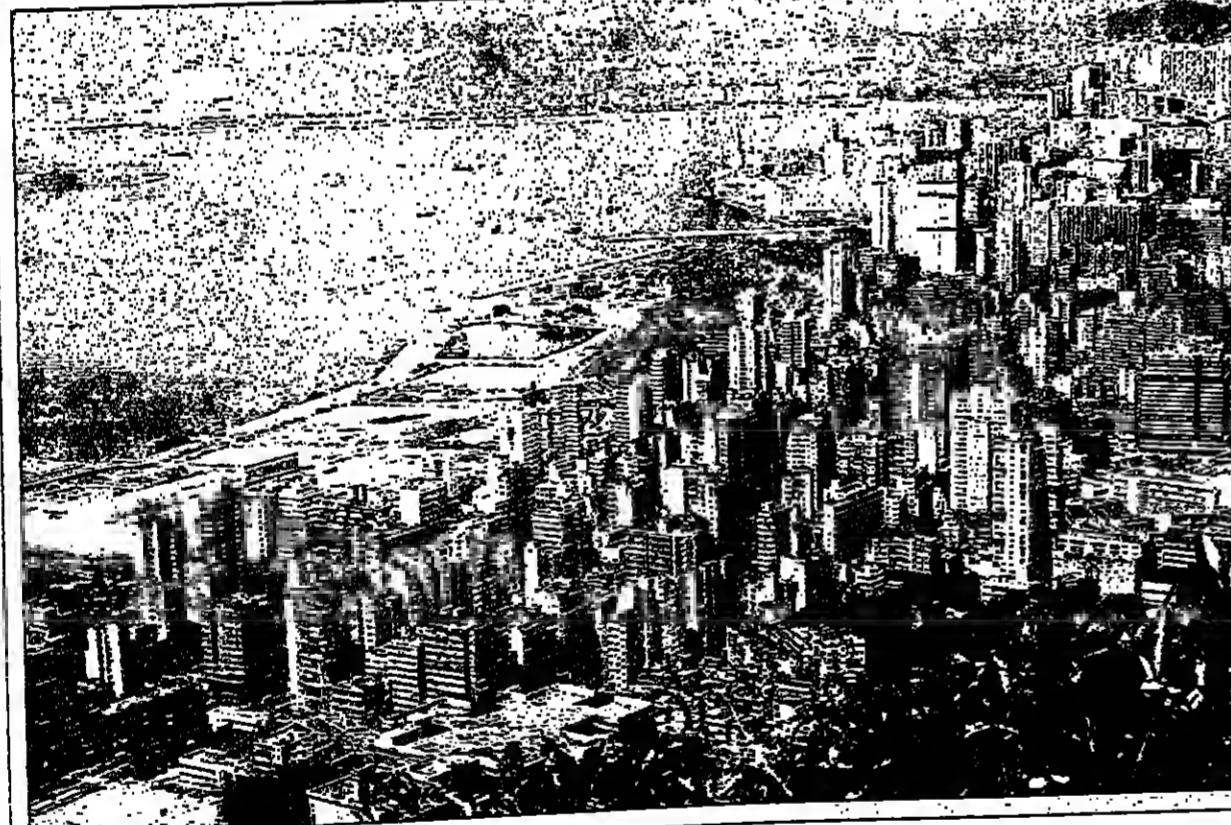
Other charges against three of the men were upheld. The two men still in jail will be released next week after serving eight years.

Amnesty would like to see a far more wide-ranging reassessment. "Following the death of Deng Xiaoping, the new leadership should take the opportunity to re-evaluate the events of 1989 and end the distorted and inaccurate propaganda of the last eight years. The victims and their families deserve the truth at long last, rather than the harassment, surveillance and attempts to silence their brave struggle for truth and justice," Amnesty said in a statement yesterday.

In reality, Mr Deng's heirs need his legacy in order to boost the chances of their own political survival. President Jiang Zemin is positioning himself carefully before this autumn's full Communist Party Congress, and the top leadership will have convinced themselves that now is an inappropriate time for anyone to start rewriting history.



The rise and rise of Asia's capitalist heaven



These views might be of three different cities: a sleepy little port, a bustling town on its way up, and a 21st century megapolis. But these are views of the same part of Hong Kong, looking down from the hills above the harbour to the city

below. The top one was taken in 1957; the second, in 1977; the third in 1997, the year that Hong Kong is to return to China.

Visitors to Government House, Chris Patten's residence, are reminded that once, the Governor could

assess the level of prosperity in Hong Kong by counting the ships in the harbour. Now, you cannot see the harbour from Mr Patten's elegant house.

Photographs:
Alan Armstrong-Wright

Advertisement

Hong Kong's defiant democracy movement prepared for a series of mass rallies to condemn Peking's bloody 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, just 28 days before China moves in to retake control of the British colony, Reuters reports.

Activists were busy in Hong Kong Island's biggest park, putting the final touches to the "Pillar of Shame", a sculpture of twisted bodies symbolising oppression.

Activists have locked horns with civic authorities over the sculpture, by Danish artist Jans Galschiot, accusing local leaders of censorship for refusing to let them display the 27ft statue in parks after the rallies end.

"Our application on the setting up of the Pillar of Shame in our parks was rejected for political reasons," said Mak Hoi-wah, a rally organiser.

Leung Kwok-Hung, one of the

organisers of the demonstrations, said he was expecting 40,000 people at a candlelit vigil in the park to remember those who perished.

A handful of demonstrators gathered late yesterday across the road from the Chinese mission, putting up a wreath and lighting candles. They hung banners that said: "The heroes from the people never die. Homage to the martyrs of the democracy movement" and: "Turn the anger into power and end the one-party dictatorship".

In 1989, a million people flooded Hong Kong's streets in horror over Peking's brutality.

On Monday, Hong Kong's future leader, Tung Chee-hwa, said it was time to forget Tiananmen. And he criticised the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, the main organiser of pro-democracy protests, branded as subversive by Peking.



Visual protest: The statue, 'Pillar of Shame', is placed in Victoria Park, Hong Kong yesterday. Photograph: AP



international

Bundesbank chief cracks whip on gold deal

Inre Karacs
Bonn

The German government yesterday sued for peace in its war with the mighty Bundesbank, and struck a "compromise" that was little short of unconditional surrender.

Frankfurt could keep its cursed gold for now, the Finance Minister, Theo Waigel, graciously conceded. The profits from 50 years of German fru-

gality would eventually be grabbed by the greedy state, but not when it needed them most.

Under the new deal, dictated by Hans Tietmeyer, the President of the Bundesbank, the gold and its hypothetical profit will be safely locked away in the vaults until it is decided which countries have qualified for European monetary union.

Mr Tietmeyer swept into Bonn in the morning, and caught the government in the

middle of a backbench rebellion. Three weeks ago, when Mr Waigel had flown to Frankfurt by helicopter to deliver the edict, the Bundesbank was forced to eat humble pie. Now Mr Tietmeyer was the guest, and that was not the only change of role.

The unelected civil servant, invoking the popular will, was facing a representative of a government no longer assured of its majority.

Two MPs had defected to the Bundesbank's side at the weekend. By yesterday morning, dozens more had informed their whips that their voices could not be relied on.

On the eve of a no-confidence motion, Mr Waigel could only retreat, happily accepting the "compromise" offered by the Bundesbank.

The book value of the gold, worth about DM50bn (£1.8bn),

would be brought in line with today's market prices. But while the revaluation would take place this year, two years earlier than planned, the proceeds would only flood into the state coffers next year.

The profits of the Bundesbank board will not be used, therefore, to massage the state's burgeoning debts in the qualifying year for Ecu, and Germany will remain on course for busting the Maastricht criteria.

Mr Waigel now needs to find

DM10bn to balance the books before the great European weighing-in early next year.

With borrowing banned by Maastricht itself and further taxes ruled out by coalition partners, the German government is expected to go for a clear-out of the family silver, starting with shares in state-owned companies.

The sums may still fall short

of requirements, but the question of whether Germany will be

able to perform its limbo-dancing feat is no longer the greatest concern.

Another senior Bundesbank figure, Edgar Meister, warned

yesterday that Mr Waigel's confidence-destroying alchemy had already brought the timetable of monetary union into question.

Germany's failure to keep the books straight has opened the floodgate to what German

politicians contemptuously describe as "Latin" trickery. The

smart money in the markets is

on a soft euro; a cheap imitation of the once rock-solid

Deutschmark.

It remains to be seen whether the Bundesbank, which has again demonstrated its virtual right of veto over the project, can live with that. There may yet to be a secret clause to the devil's pact struck by Germany's two most powerful money-men: one dictating the exclusion of Italy at all costs.

Jospin picks clean team to wipe out legacy of scandal

John Lichfield
Paris

The Socialist leader and new French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, is today expected to signal a break with the financial scandals of both the left and the right by announcing a cleaner-than-clean cabinet.

Mr Jospin is determined to exclude anyone who is under investigation, or even suspicion, for financial wrong-doing. As part of his drive to set a new, less imperial style of government, he will also insist his ministers abandon the French habit of accumulating regional and national political posts. No one will be allowed to be both minister and mayor of a town or city.

The great unknown last night was whether the government would include Communist ministers. Mr Jospin and the Communist leader, Robert Hue, are keen that it should. Mr Hue was last night trying to win over doubtful colleagues who believe a formal coalition with the

But Delors to turn down ministerial role and stay as adviser on EU

Socialists would be an ideological, or tactical, error.

It now seems likely that the former European Commission president, Jacques Delors, will turn down the chance to be minister for foreign and European affairs. Socialist officials say Mr Delors, 71, has informed Mr Jospin that he would prefer to remain a background adviser on relations with the European Union, so he may still return to the scene as an *eminent grise*. The resurfacing of Mr Delors will delight those who regard him as one of the last inspirational figures committed to European integration.

One of the first leading Socialist figures to visit Mr Jospin yesterday after he moved into the prime ministerial mansion,

the Marignan palace, was Laurent Fabius, who was briefly prime minister in the 1980s. It is believed that Mr Fabius may be offered the job of parliamentary president (a more political post than Speaker of the House of Commons) or Foreign Minister.

Other leading Socialists tipped to be included in the cabinet are Dominique Strauss-Kahn (finance) and Martine Auhuy. Mr Delors' daughter (employment). Mr Jospin will also appoint France's first Green minister, or even two Green ministers. The Greens, who made an electoral pact with the Socialists and won eight seats, have agreed to be part of the government but made it clear yesterday that they expect at least "one large, technical ministry" and one smaller post.

The appointments to the foreign and defence ministries will be examined with special attention. These are two areas in which the constitution gives the President direct influence and it is expected that Mr Jospin will appoint people who will meet the approval of Jacques Chirac. Mr Delors would have been a useful choice, since he qualifies these days as virtually a national treasure. However, it seems the former Commission President was

reluctant to upset this status by getting involved in what may be messy negotiations on the future of one of his own creations, the European single currency.

The defence appointment may give some clues as to how the Jospin government will deal with another piece of unfinished business - France's declaration

that it may rejoin the military structures of Nato. The Socialists criticised this move in opposition. President Chirac himself seems to have lost some of his initial enthusiasm. The likelihood is that a decision, due this month, will be postponed.

Another open question is whether Mr Jospin, known as

one of the cleanest men in French politics, will use his new office to pursue vigorously the financial scandals bubbling away in the centre-right parties.

The new Prime Minister has promised to strengthen the independence of the judiciary. This may speed up several investigations which were held

back by the former government.

Mr Jospin has been quoted as saying in private, however, that he sees no point in letting all the skeletons fall out of the centre-right's cupboard, as it would only serve the interests of the far-right National Front.

■ Paris — The Paris prosecutor's office opened an investi-

gation into suspected abuses in public works contracts under the Gaullist-led Paris regional council, Reuter reports.

They said the investigation targeted contracts awarded by the Ile de France regional council, headed by Michel Giraud, a senior member of Mr Chirac's Gaullist RPR party.

Reaching out: Jospin, on the campaign trail with Socialist colleague Elisabeth Guigou, wants to banish corruption

Photograph: Brian Harris

Israel left pins hopes on army man

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

Barak: Labour strategists see him as another Rabin

soldier. He will replace Shimon Peres, defeated as prime minister last year, but who refused to step down as party leader.

The Labour party is still full of doubts. "Ehud Barak is an unknown quantity," says Yossi Beilin, architect of the Oslo accords and his closest rival for the Labour leadership. "He will try to beat Bibi Netanyahu by emulating him and trying to appeal to a centrist vote which I don't believe exists."

Others suspect that Labour's problems may be too deep to solve. "With Barak leading the Labour party, with its whole mission to grab votes from the militarist right, the Labour party doesn't stand a chance," says Professor Baruch Kimmerling of Hebrew University. "The exercise is so transparent as to be an insult to the intelligence of the public."

He says the real lesson of the 1996 election is that most Israeli Jews voted for parties which rejected the Oslo accords.

Political predictions are peculiarly difficult because of the fragmentation of Jewish society. Electing the prime minister separately has strengthened the small parties (it was meant to do the opposite). The third largest party in the Knesset is now Shas, a religious party drawing support from Jews whose families came from the Middle East. Natan Sharansky was able to mobilise many of the 600,000 Russian immigrants behind his new party. The division between secular and religious Israelis is deeper than ever. Ilan Pappe, a political scientist from Haifa University, says: "The main development is that Israel is becoming more Jewish and less democratic."

In such a divided society, Mr Barak, 55, may not be the ideal man to chip away at support for Mr Netanyahu.

Born in a kibbutz called Mishmar Hasharon, he is always seen part of the left-wing, secular army-Labour élite. In many ways he is the prototype of the secular Ashkenazi (mostly of East European origin) establishment despised by oriental Jews. Kibbutzniks, always more popular abroad than in Israel, may make up as many as 30 per cent of those voting for the Labour leadership, but they are only 1.8 per cent of the Israeli population.

The strategy which sees Mr Barak as the Labour candidate most likely to beat Mr Netanyahu is probably correct, however. If Peres only just lost the election to be prime minister after a miserable campaign,

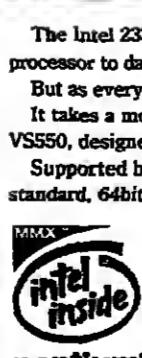
"I don't think that Labour has lost its last chance to win," says Professor Emanuel Gutman, a political scientist at Hebrew university. "Last time there were only a few tens of thousands of votes in it. Labour lost the election because of the four suicide bombs."

Many in the Labour party believe that with any candidate less fumbling than Mr Peres they would have won last year. Mr Netanyahu is distrusted by many Israelis not on the left. His first year in office has seen a series of crises and the disruption of negotiations with the Palestinians by building the Jewish settlement at Har Homa.

The real objection to Mr Barak is that he would not know what to do with victory. "Nobody can disagree with his views because nobody knows what they are," says Mr Beilin.

WHAT COULD TOP INTEL'S LAUNCH OF THEIR NEW 233MHz PROCESSOR?

THE BUSINESS SYSTEM THAT RUNS IT TO PERFECTION.



The Intel 233MHz Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology has landed, their fastest Pentium processor to date.

But as everybody knows, it takes more than a fast processor to make a fast PC. It takes a motherboard developed expressly to maximise its potential, like the one in the Apricot VS550, designed, developed and built in Mitsubishi's state-of-the-art facilities in the UK.

Supported by a complete specification that won't hamstring its performance: 32Mb of RAM as standard, 64bit ATI graphics with 2Mb video RAM, 512Kb cache and a high performance Quantum hard disk drive.

So from Day One of the new processor you can order a PC backed not only by one of the world's largest IT corporations, but supported by our own nationwide network of accredited resellers.

At a price that will make anyone who just settled for anything slower weep.

So call us right now for details. And get down to business with our fastest Pentium processor based system to date.

- Intel 233MHz Pentium Processor with MMX technology
- 32Mb RAM as standard, 512Kb Pipeline burst L2 cache
- High Performance 3.2Gb Quantum Tempest HDD
- Integrated 64-bit ATI graphics with 2Mb Video RAM
- DMI management features
- 2 USB Ports
- Windows '95 or Windows 3.11
- 3 Year free warranty (1st year on-site)
- 15" colour monitor

MITSUBISHI
ELECTRIC
APRICOT PCs & SERVERS

CALL NOW FOR AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE 0800 212 422

Web address: <http://www.apricot.co.uk/offers/sp-offer.htm>

e-mail address: hotline@apricot.mee.com

The Intel Inside Logo and Pentium are registered trademarks and MMX is a trademark of Intel Corporation. Prices and specifications are correct at time of going to press. E+OE

مكنا من الاصد

Bombs and terror help Berisha cling to power in Albania poll

As election day nears, the country's loathed President is resorting to violence to remain in office. Andrew Gumbel in Tirana reports

There could have been no clearer indication of how Albania's much-loathed president, Sali Berisha, intends to cling on to power. On Sunday, his most loyal newspaper, *Albania*, announced that the Café Freskia in the centre of Tirana was about to be blown up as an act of revenge against its owner, Lush Perpali, who just happens to be deputy interior minister and a member of Mr Berisha's least favourite political party, the Socialists.

The next day, a bomb duly exploded in an upstairs toilet of the café, devastating the prefabricated wooden structure and injuring more than 20 people. The same evening, there was another explosion at Tirana's main bus station, just a few minutes before curfew, injuring another nine.

With less than four weeks to go before general elections that the overwhelming majority of Albanians hope will see off Mr Berisha for good, an unmistakable strategy of terror is being waged, and the President is making little or no effort to cover up the role he is playing in it.

The President's own guardsmen have been caught time and again provoking exchanges of gunfire after dark, deepening the climate of fear gripping the country and providing an excuse to extend the state of emergency that makes normal election campaigning impossible.

The guards have been used, too, for more sinister purposes – attempting to quell an anti-presidential revolt in the town of Cerkia two weeks ago in contravention of their constitutional role, and then bursting into Tirana's main hospital and opening fire in anger because one of their injured men had died there.

Such behaviour has cast a net of deep gloom over the country, with many Albanians convinced that Mr Berisha and his Democratic Party will throw this month's elections just as surely as they cheated their way to victory at the last elections a year ago. "Berisha's mentality won't permit him to admit defeat and go quietly. He would rather destroy the country than relinquish power," said one young Tirana lawyer. As the eccentric ecologist politician Namik Hoti put it: "The only way to get him off his horse is to shoot him off."

At first glance, the fatalism seems amply justified. Since the height of the popular revolt in March, when Mr Berisha was on the verge of fleeing the



Mayhem: A bloodstained waiter views the wreckage of the Café Freskia in Tirana after a bomb blast which injured 20. Photograph: Reuter

country, he has clawed his way back to a position of power with considerable ingenuity but scant regard for the democratic renewal that he and the other political leaders are supposed to be working towards.

Forced to accept an all-party government led by a Socialist, Bashkim Fino, Mr Berisha's strategy has been to concentrate as much power in his own hands as possible, taking full advantage of his crushing majority in parliament while it was still sitting, keeping tight rein on the interior ministry which, under the state of emergency, controls the armed forces as well as the police, and refusing to relinquish his grip on the secret police.

As a result, Mr Fino has failed to impose any real authority and behaves like a man permanently terrified of the spies and secret agents in his midst. "Berisha has deliberately created a parallel authority. Every time the government tries to do something, he blocks it," complained Fatos Nano, leader of the Socialist Party and the man most widely tipped to replace Mr Berisha if the elections run even half-way smoothly.



Sali Berisha: 'Would rather destroy Albania than relinquish power'

Mr Berisha's men have even gone so far as to block Mr Fino himself, opening fire on his convoy as he travelled to the northern city of Shkodra a few weeks ago. When the police chief of Shkodra attempted to prosecute the men he was convinced had staged the ambush, he was stripped of his post and

tries to claim victory in the election, the revolt that almost toppled him in March will resume. Unlike last year, the international community is on its guard and the Albanian people are armed to the teeth.

The smartest thing for Mr Berisha, and the option many commentators believe he favours, is to aim for around 30 per cent of the vote – using intimidation and force as necessary – to ensure that neither he nor the Democratic Party can be quashed by constitutional means. He might even be able to wangle staying on as president, though as an insurance policy he is also standing for parliament.

In some ways this is the most sinister prospect for Albania, because the country, and the new government, might end up every bit as hamstrung by Mr Berisha as it is in the present transitional phase.

The opposition parties can only hope the country won't allow itself to be derailed in this way. "Laurent Kabila said recently he would not permit Zaire to become another Albania," Mr Nano said. "Well, we don't want Albania to become another Zaire."

significant shifts

Swiss banks find \$3m of Mobutu's fortune

Switzerland's secretive banks have found only \$3.4m in toppled Zairean ruler Mobutu Sese Seko's assets, including shares, securities and a safe deposit box, banking watchdogs said. The sum, a fraction of the billions Kinshasa says Mr Mobutu has stashed away, was immediately disputed by a government critic who predicted a long legal wrangle over the deposed dictator's controversial fortune.

Reuters – Geneva

Alliance takes on Taliban

The Taliban Islamic army sent fresh troops to its front lines in western Afghanistan to fight a new, larger enemy alliance. The expanded alliance – calling itself the National Islamic Front for the Deliverance of Afghanistan – adds forces loyal to Afghanistan's former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and a small royalist party to the mix of minority ethnic groups already fighting the Taliban in the north.

AP – Kabul

Poison threat to Olympic venue

Greenpeace said it had discovered more than 50 drums containing highly toxic dioxin waste at a site on the shores of Homebush Bay, adjacent to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games venue. Matt Ruebel, a spokesman for the environmental group, said the drums contained dangerous levels of dioxin and many were in poor condition. The site is 2km from the site of the main Olympic stadium and close to the Olympic ferry terminal.

AP – Sydney

Dylan leaves hospital

Rock legend Bob Dylan has been released from an undisclosed hospital where he was treated for a potentially fatal infection. "I'm just glad to be feeling better. I really thought I'd be seeing Elvis [Presley] soon," Dylan said through a Columbia Records spokesman.

Dylan's Los Angeles publicist, Elliot Mintz, said the singer was discharged at the weekend and was expected to recover fully in four to six weeks – in time to begin the North American leg of his concert tour in August. Reuters – Los Angeles

Boost to Robinson

Finland's former defence minister, Elizabeth Rehn, said she had withdrawn her candidacy for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, leaving Ireland's President Mary Robinson as the main candidate for the post. Ms Robinson's candidacy received a boost last Thursday when Sonia Picado, Costa Rica's ambassador to Washington, and a leading contender, said the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, had not offered her the job. Mr Annan is not expected to announce his decision until July.

Reuters – New York

Peking defends arms to Iran

China yesterday defended what it called transfers of small amounts of conventional weapons to Iran, describing them as appropriate and legal.

Reuters – Peking

Amie banned in Russian bases

Russia's new defence minister has banned American "spray 'em and slay 'em" action movies starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone from Russian Army bases after a spate of shootings by crazed Russian soldiers. General Igor Sergeyev banned the showing of the action movies last week after a soldier went berserk in Siberia, killing six. Although the Russian military has been suffering from starvation, desertion and corruption and has not been paid for months, the Defence Minister puts the blame squarely on Western media. In the worst incident recently, on Monday, a member of Russia's peace-keeping forces in Georgia shot 13 comrades, killing 10 and wounding three others.

Christopher Bellamy

Room 154 want to see the city. Next time.

*Based on two people sharing.

At Marriott, our superb locations and unique range of leisure and golf facilities make it easier for you to do exactly what you want. Even if that's just staying in to share a romantic meal. What's more, the prices quoted in our brochure are the lowest you'll find for Marriott Leisure Breaks. There are 23

Marriott Hotels in the UK including 7 hotel and country clubs. For reservations with prices starting at just £29 per person* call

0800 221 222. For our best ever value Leisure Breaks brochure call 0800 444 878.

Marriott

HOTELS • RESORTS • SUITES



ITV Selected

P307

ABERDEEN, BIRMINGHAM, BRADFORD, BRISTOL, CARDIFF, CHEPSTOW, CHESHIRE, CHICHESTER, DERBY, EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, HEATHROW, LEEDS, LONDON, MAIDSTONE, MANCHESTER [1998], NEWCASTLE, PORTSMOUTH, PRESTON, SOUTHAMPTON [1998], SWANSEA, SWINDON, WARE

obituaries / gazette

Doc Cheatham

"If I'd known I was going to live so long, I'd have taken better care of myself." The jazz pianist, Eubie Blake was speaking on his 100th birthday. There is a coterie of jazz musicians who have lived for nine decades and are still playing, the altoist Benny Carter (90 in August) and the tenor man Benny Waters (95) amongst them. Watch this space.

Jazz is such an all-embracing way of life that the greatest musicians don't stop playing until they stop breathing. For men like Duke Ellington or Louis Armstrong retirement would have been unthinkable. We all knew that Doc Cheatham, who has died a fortnight short of his 92nd birthday, would have been metaphorically had his trumpet to his lips when the time came. Indeed he came happily off the stand at the Blues Alley club in Georgetown at the end of his last set on Saturday night. He suffered a stroke on Sunday and died in his sleep with his wife by his bed. Like Carter and Waters it seemed that he had been an old man all his life.

Cheatham was a late starter if ever there was one. He played the part in trumpet sections through the great days of the big bands, but he was 60 before he flowered as a soloist. Such anti-precoicity is otherwise unheard of.

His mother was a teacher and his father, a barber, was descended from Cherokee and Choctaw Indians who had settled in Cheatham County, Tennessee. The story is that his family gave him his nickname before he was seven and from then on it was the only name he

ever answered to. But it is more likely that the name came later when he played with an amateur band at the McBarry Medical College.

His professional career began at 15 when he left the local chapel's kids' band to play with a travelling carnival and the tattooed trumpet on his arm was a reminder of those days. When he was at his most impressionable age he moved to Chicago. King Oliver was the man to copy and before anyone outside of New Orleans had even heard of Louis Armstrong, Cheatham had already become a jazz trumpeter using Oliver's style.

He played with the two most majestic of blues singers, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. As if that were not accolade enough he was also worked for Jelly Roll Morton and during the Chicago time Armstrong used Cheatham as his substitute when he couldn't make a job.

He became a member of the legendary Sam Wooding's showband and toured Europe with it in 1929-31. Along with others in the cast, he worked with a mixture of comedy routines and jazz performances which consolidated the group's enormous popularity outside the United States (at home Wooding's bands flopped consistently).

When he returned home Cheatham had a brief and unsuccessful marriage and joined McKinney's Cotton Pickers for a couple of years until he was invited to move to the more sophisticated confines of Cab Calloway's orchestra in 1933. He married a dancer from the

Cotton Club who was from the same family as the avant-garde saxophonist Ornette Coleman. She nagged him continually throughout their seven-year marriage to get a job away from music, "I can't stand that. I'd rather be alone." She finally went home to Texas and married someone else.

When Dizzy Gillespie took the chair beside him in 1939, Cheatham had been with the Cawley trumpet section long enough to be already a veteran. Gillespie had been brought to the band by another trumpeter, Mario Bauza, a Cuban who interested both Cheatham and Bauza's friendship was to affect the music of both the other men in later years.

Ill-health forced Cheatham to leave Calloway. "They never did figure out what was wrong with me and I didn't regain my full strength until the Sixties. It took that long, and at one point a doctor told me, 'Doc, maybe you better just lay down the rest of your life.' When I got out of the hospital I went to Europe for a few months to rest. Then I joined Teddy Wilson's big band and after that Benny Carter's, but I wasn't up to par. I quit playing and took a job in the post office. In 1943 I tried it again in Eddie Heywood's little group - which wasn't too hard, because Eddie wrote everything out and took long piano solos."

Heywood was the darling of New York's coffee society. When Cheatham joined the sextet he did take solos and the recordings of the time reveal him as a thoughtful player who was not

an innovator. His style had elements of other trumpeters - Armstrong, Joe Smith, Buck Clayton and Joe Thomas amongst them. With Heywood he worked and recorded with Billie Holiday.

"Taking a solo is like an electric shock. First, I have no idea what I will play, but then something in my brain leads me to build very rapidly, and I start thinking real fast from note to note. I don't worry about chords, because I can hear the harmonic structure in the back of my mind. I've been through all that so many years it's second nature to me."

During the next 20 years Cheatham, fired by the earlier friendship with Bauza, worked mostly with top Latin bands led by Machito, Tito Puente, Perez Prado and others. He also made jazz tours with a sophisticated revivalist band led by the de Paris Brothers, Wilbur and Sidney. He had first worked with Wilbur in Philadelphia in 1927 and had always admired Sidney's trumpet playing. He toured in Africa and Europe with them and retraced those steps with the pianist Sammy Price (Europe, 1958) and the flautist Herbie Mann (Africa, 1960).

He led his own band in New York for five years and then in 1966, at the age of 60, joined Benny Goodman's Quintet. He was exposed as a soloist as never before. While Goodman was satisfied, Cheatham wasn't and began working on his style with a new intensity. He gave up the Latin playing and played in Dixieland bands in New York. His New York Quar-



Cheatham: 'When I'm gone, it'll be just about over, my kind of playing. It will be as if it hadn't existed at all' Photograph: David Redfern

ter evolved from this and from the early Seventies onwards he worked as a featured solo player. He began playing Sunday lunchtime sessions at Sweet Basil in New York, and the job lasted for 17 years.

Revered as a part of history, he toured the world and was never short of work again. His gentle playing and his dulcet voice were in demand everywhere and he had recently enjoyed a musical partnership with Nicholas Payton, a trum-

pete who at 23 was almost 70 years his junior. Earlier this year an album they made together for the Verve label entered the Top 20 Jazz Album Chart (I have to confess I didn't know that there was such a thing).

Peyton is a native of New Orleans and Cheatham had reluctantly taken to spending much of his time in the city, working and recording with local musicians. "I can smell beautiful things in the air in New Orleans," he said.

"I'm almost the last of the line, I've talked to kids who come to hear us who don't even know who Louis Armstrong is. But they listen. How do you do that?" they'll ask. "That's beautiful," they'll say. "When I'm gone, it'll be just about over, my kind of playing. It will be as if it hadn't existed at all, as if all of us hadn't worked so long and hard."

Doc Cheatham's final European visit was last month when he toured with Clark Terry.

Steve Vee:

Adolphus Anthony "Doc" Cheatham, trumpeter; born Nashville, Tennessee 13 June 1905; three times married (one son, one daughter); died Washington DC 2 June 1997.



Thomas: 'Bless this house' Photograph: Hulton Getty

Eddie Thomas

Eddie Thomas was a brilliant welterweight, who won the European, Empire and British titles and came close to a world championship. But he will be best remembered for his success as a manager.

Under his guidance, Howard Winstone won the WBC Featherweight title and Ken Buchanan became undisputed World Lightweight Champion a decade before Colin Jones, a fiery welterweight from Gorseinon, came heartbreakingly close to giving him a third world champion, fighting a controversial draw for the vacant WBC Welterweight title in 1983. Thomas also steered Eddie Avoth to the British Light-Heavyweight title, and was involved in various roles in the careers of many other champions and contenders before a combination of failing health and business worries forced him out of the sport which remained his lifelong passion.

He was born in Merthyr Tydfil in 1926. As a teenager he followed his father and three of his six brothers into the mines at

Cwmdu, and continued working underground even as a successful professional fighter. All six of his brothers boxed, but his father opposed Eddie's taking it up on the grounds that it was too dangerous. Ironically, his father later lost an arm in a mining accident, while Thomas survived nearly 50 fights without a hint of damage.

He started boxing at the Merthyr Tydfil ex-servicemen's club, and his fast left jab - later to be the trademark of his protege Winstone and Buchanan - carried him to the ABA lightweight title in 1946. He turned pro after participating in a win for Britain against America, as part of a team which included the young Randolph Turpin, who was scheduled to face Mickey Duff on his debut.

Duff was a sharp judge of talent even then, and promptly pulled himself out of the engagement. It was, he still jokes, the shrewdest move of his managerial career. They later became bitter promotional rivals, but Duff always had the highest regard for Thomas the fighter.

Thomas became known as the Singing Boxer for his custom of entertaining the crowd with the Welsh hymn "Bless This House" after every fight. By 1949, he was British Welterweight Champion and a leading contender for the Ray Robinson's world title. He retained the title against Cliff Curvis, and the Robinson match moved closer when he knocked out Pat Patrick of South Africa to become Empire Champion in January 1951 and, the following month, took the European title from Charles Humez of France.

But then it all went wrong: he lost the European title to Humez in a rematch four months later, and in October, Wally Thom took his British title to deny him outright ownership of the Lonsdale Belt (awarded after winning three championship fights). Plagued by weight problems, he took a year off and then, after a fruitless comeback in 1953, retired to concentrate on developing his mining business.

His interest in boxing was re-

vived by the speed and elegance of the 15-year-old Howard Winstone, whom he watched win his third schoolboy title, and he kept faith with the youngster when a horrifying hand injury (which cost Winstone the tips of several fingers) kept him out of the ring for three years.

Trained by Thomas, he came back to win the 1958 Empire Games gold medal at bantamweight, and then launched a dazzling professional career which saw him win two Lonsdale Belts, the British and European Featherweight titles, and engage in three classic World Title challenges against the magnificent Mexican Vicente Saldivar. When Saldivar retired immediately after their third fight, Winstone finally became world champion by stopping Mitsunori Seki for the vacant WBC title, and Thomas's clear, soaring voice led the celebratory singing from the Albert Hall ring.

Winstone was very much "his boy" and the pair remained close friends till the end, but his relationship with Buchanan was much more difficult. The prickly Scot felt, with some justification, that Thomas's stubborn

independence from the London axis which virtually monopolised big-time boxing then, was regarding his career and restricting his earnings, but it was Thomas's managerial skill which manoeuvred him into an unexpected world title opportunity against Ismael Laguna in 1970 and, a year later, it was the Welshman's cool expertise in the corner which saved Buchanan's title when fatal damage looked like costing him the rematch with Laguna.

His management of the hard-punching Colin Jones was masterly, and even though Jones failed on three attempts in the world title, he still earned enough to joke that he was "only Tony in Gorseinon". Thomas was honoured for his work on that bleak mining in Aberfan in 1966 when a slag heap engulfed the local school. He was among the first at the scene, using his mining expertise to organise the futile rescue attempts and salvaging many of the children's bodies himself. An emotional man, he was reluctant to discuss the experi-

ence, but the people of his own community never forgot his efforts, and in 1992 gave him the freedom of the town and in 1994 elected him mayor.

He was wonderful company, a great raconteur and a fine singer who used to grace the choir in Cyfarthfa church in Merthyr. He was also generous, in cash as well as in spirit. When my younger son was seven, he developed a bizarre ambition to carry the round boards at a boxing show. Thomas arranged for him to do it on one of his promtinings which was televised live on ITV, and solemnly paid him his wages after the show. Two days later, Ian received his first letter. It was from Eddie Thomas, and enclosed a £10 bonus for a job well done. In the small things as well as the large, he always had style.

Harry Mullan

Eddie Thomas, boxer and boxing manager; born Merthyr Tydfil 27 July 1926; MBE 1984; twice married (three sons, two daughters); died Merthyr Tydfil 2 June 1997.

Nikolai Tikhonov

It was an extraordinary feature of life at the top of the Soviet hierarchy that, despite decades of bearing the full weight of responsibility for running the great state, so many of its members lived far beyond the normal allotted span. If one had survived Stalin's bloody purges of the 1930s and 1940s, the chances were good that one would live into one's nineties. The relationship between fear, stress and longevity cries out for explanation.

Nikolai Alexandrovich Tikhonov, who has died aged 92, was a fairly typical member of the geriatric Politburo that allegedly ran the Soviet Union un-

der three successive, ailing General Secretaries: Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko. A colourless technocrat, he was promoted to the rank of an engineer in 1950, when he moved into the mainstream of the administration as a staff member of the Soviet Ministry of Ferrous Metallurgy. Five years later he was made the head of its Main Board with the rank of Deputy Minister.

Khrushchev's administrative reforms in 1957 led to Tikhonov's return to Ukraine as Chairman of the Dnepropetrovsk Economic Council. In 1960 he returned to Moscow as Chairman of the State Economic Council of the Soviet Council of Ministers. He was

made a candidate member of the Party Central Committee in 1961 and a full member in 1966, deputy chairman of Gosplan, 1963-65, deputy chairman, 1965-76, and first deputy chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers under Alexei Kosygin until 1980. He became British and European Featherweight titles, and was involved in various roles in the careers of many other champions and contenders before a combination of failing health and business worries forced him out of the sport which remained his lifelong passion.

While Tikhonov's Party career was not as meteoric as that of some of his comrades-in-

arms, taking him nearly 40 years to reach the pinnacle, his wide experience in industrial management ensured that his Central Committee responsibilities would focus on the economy. More than most of the other leaders, he travelled in the West on technical missions, and this comparatively wider knowledge, coupled with the special patronage he enjoyed under Brezhnev, may explain his presence among the most influential members of the Politburo in its last phase.

He survived Andropov's reign, and when Andropov died in February 1984 it was Tikhonov who nominated the decrepit

Chernenko as his successor, a mere 10 hours later. Gromyko seconded the proposal with the "puzzling exhortation to 'look into the future'". Whatever the misgivings of the other Politburo members, the golden rule of not opposing the first to speak was observed, and for 13 months the Soviet Union continued in its stagnant condition.

In March 1985, when Gromyko nominated Gorbachev, again urging the others to "look into the future", Tikhonov described the energetic and comparatively young new General Secretary as "the first Secretary who understands economics", a curious reflection on himself, to

say nothing of the vast economics establishment that had brought the country to its parlous state.

Since he had not concealed his hostility to the fast-rising Gorbachev in earlier years, Tikhonov's tenure in the Politburo, regardless of his advanced age, could not be expected to last for much longer, and in September 1985, six months into the new leadership, he retired, officially for health reasons, making way for the new generation that would inaugurate the era of perestroika and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union.

Harry Shukman

Nikolai Alexandrovich Tikhonov, politician; born Kharkov, Ukraine 14 May 1905; died Moscow 1 June 1997.

which a person served with an enforcement notice could raise when prosecuted for failing to comply.

The reasons for the policy were clear: they related, first, to the unsuitability of the subject-matter for decision by the criminal court; secondly, to the need for the validity of the notice to be conclusively determined quickly enough to enable planning control to be effective and to allow the timetable for service of such notices in the Act to be operated; and thirdly, to the fact that the criminal proceedings were part of the mechanism for securing the enforcement of planning control in the public interest.

There was no dispute in the present case that the appellant had failed to comply with an enforcement notice issued by the planning authority which on its face complied with the requirements of the Act and had not been quashed. He was therefore guilty of the offence and the matters he proposed to raise at his trial were irrelevant.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

pellant's appeal against the enforcement notice was dismissed, but he failed to comply with the terms of the notice. A summons was issued, alleging a breach of section 179(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

At the appellant's trial in the Crown Court he wished to challenge the service of the enforcement notice on the grounds that the council had acted in bad faith and had been motivated by immaterial considerations. The judge accepted the Crown's submission that such grounds should have been raised by way of an application for judicial review, and that at a criminal trial a notice which had not been quashed should be treated as valid. The appellant therupon changed his plea to guilty.

Anthony Speight QC and Francis Madoc Mathews (S.J. Burton & Co) for the appellant; Richard Humphreys (Sharp Pritchard for Peter H. Bardsley, Morgan) for the Crown.

The correct approach was illustrated by the decision in *Quatelynn Ltd v Plymouth City Council* [1988] QB 114, in which it was held that the court should treat the question before it as one which could be determined quickly enough to enable planning control to be effective and to allow the timetable for service of such notices in the Act to be operated. The question in the present case was likewise one of construction. What was meant by "enforcement notice" in section 179(1) of the 1990 Act? When one examined Part VII of the 1990 Act, the scheme of enforcement of planning control which it exhibited, and the history of its provisions, one was driven to the conclusion that "enforcement notice" meant a notice which was issued by the planning authority which had not been quashed. It was impossible to construct a general theory of the "enforcement notice" defence which applied to every statutory power, whatever the terms and policy of the statute.

The history showed that over the years there had been a consistent policy of progressively restricting the kind of issues

Deaths

KIRKHOPE: In loving memory of Anthony James Henry Kirkhope, born 10 October 1947, died suddenly in London, on 29 May 1997, aged 49. Services: Friends Chapel, Chapel of Rest, 491a New King's Road, London SW14 6TO. The funeral will be held on Friday 6 June 1997 at 12.30pm, Lewisham Crematorium, London SE6. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2012 or fax 071-293 2010.

Royal Engagements

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh were with the Duke of Edinburgh's son, Prince Edward, and his wife Sophie, Countess of Wessex, when they visited the Royal Hospital, Cheltenham, on Saturday 21 June 1997. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh also visited the Royal Hospital, Cheltenham, on Saturday 21 June 1997. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh also visited the Royal Hospital, Cheltenham, on Saturday 21 June 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

General Sir Cecil Blacker, former President, British Equestrian Federation, at: Mr Bob Champion, trainer and former jockey, 35; Air Vice-Marshal George Chesserow, Lord-Lieutenant of Morayshire, 68; Sir Christopher Cockerell, inventor of the hovercraft, 87; Vice-Admiral Sir Tony Frere, Chief of Fleet Supply, 59; Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Gwynne, Master of Her Majesty's Household, 69; Mr Alan Green, former chief executive, British Aerospace, 86; The Earl of Hesketh, Chancellor, Brunel University, 86; Vice-Admiral Sir John Len, 74; Mr Geoffrey Palmer, actor, 70; Mr Daniel Topolski, writer, photographer and coach, 5

The ties that bind Blair and Jospin together

Salut les vainqueurs... if Tony Blair's greeting tomorrow to France's new prime minister Lionel Jospin is anything short of heartfelt and enthusiastic, he will be missing an historic opportunity. The reason for wretchedness has nothing to do with their rendezvous, a meeting of the Socialist International: that's a largely superfluous talking shop. Ideologically, there is no point in pretending they are *copains*. In a Britain where the only Keynesians acceptable in official circles are neo-neo, Mr Jospin's 'Keynesianism seasoned by Marxism' has a decidedly ancient and foreign air. A quick, smug London consensus has formed, swirling through Labour too, dismissing Jospin as a dinosaur whose election is a mildly irritating irrelevance for go-ahead British modernisers.

That would be a terrible mistake. Jospin and his party should not be underestimated. Nor should Blair greet him cynically hoping that Jospin and his feather-bedded, reactionary supporters will pull Labour's chestnut out of the fire over European Monetary Union by destroying it. That is the politics of crossed fingers and forked tongues – the sort of politics Paris has always suspected London practises.

In fact, there are good, honest reasons why the two men should embrace in victory. One is women. With Mr Jospin, French national political life begins a gender transformation

akin to that accomplished by Labour on 1 May. Both leaders preside over young, modernising supporters. They share a passionate commitment to getting back into productive employment legions of fellow citizens who have been marginalised in recent years. Their prescriptions may differ but the ambition is the same; their respective efforts to cut youth joblessness will make a fascinating contest.

There is another reason for amity, though in these early days the two men may only dimly realise the scale and significance of their opportunity. Mr Jospin is an 'Enarque', a fully paid-up member of the French governing élite. His refined analysis of France in Europe is rooted in his generation's conviction that, when global storms blow, France needs the lodging that European Union alone can provide. People like Mr Jospin are formed by the French state tradition. But for them, above all, European participation is about serving national ends.

How foreign? Not at all. That is the position which New Labour has arrived at. It is a logical, rather pragmatic position with little sympathy for the masochistic (and Hegelian) German view that Europe is Fate, that European participation is a way of saving Germans from themselves – that if they are not tied down to the deck in Brussels the Lorelei (aggressive nationalism) will lure them to doom.

ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E1 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435 / 0171-345 2435



But the French and British leaders are fated and tied in a simpler way. They are fated to be colleagues, tied together by electoral time-scales. Together they are likely to outlast Chancellor Kohl who, even if he were to win the federal elections next year, is surely unlikely to see out another full term. That is not to imply that some new Franco-British axis against Germany is in the offing – the alliance across the Rhine has permanently entered the French political soul. It is to say that the potential for *entente* is rich and inviting.

But surely that friendship could not

survive the abstention of Britain from EMU? We think it can and will. There are ways in which the non-participation of Britain in the euro could create circumstances in which a Europe-friendly British government could act as broker, architect and picker-up of pieces.

Here are two scenarios. In one, things unravel. The German government could fall – the Free Democrats could withdraw or the Christian Democrats split. The French government could find that expectations for policy change built up in this election explode – though the surveys show a good deal of realism on the French

public's part. Even after fudging, the Maastricht criteria are met only by the Dutch. The euro does not go ahead, at least not before the turn of the century. The Blair government gets through its first term without having to think about joining; it approaches the task of re-thinking financial co-operation within the confines of the EU with clean hands, and a spring in its step.

In the other scenario Mr Jospin manages to stick with his principal electoral promises, such as abandoning the nationalisation of France Télécom, improving civil service salaries, filling the hole in the social security budget while still producing a 1998 budget that is Maastricht-compatible. Perhaps he will also manage to tack on to Maastricht a political mechanism for corralling the European Central bank. That is a heroic list of achievements. If the new French PM is able to accomplish even half of what is in his party manifesto he will have redefined the intellectual, let alone political, basis of the single currency project. He wants to 'socialise' it, in theory giving the European Central Bank a jobs target for its control of the money supply. (If that sounds contradictory, it is.) We may be sceptical. But a French socialist administration that did all that, ensuring the euro went ahead on strange new terms, could hardly be sneered at or ignored.

Either way, Jospin should not be

underestimated; nor should the capacity of the French political élite to adapt to what seems necessary. For better or worse, his fate now becomes entangled with the fate of European integration, and therefore of Tony Blair too. He is not an offshore political bachelor. This may be an arranged marriage, lacking the whiff of political eroticism in the air; whenever Blairites and Clintonites mingle. But it is a kind of marriage nevertheless; and Blair should embrace it.

Parliamentary pots and kettles

Tory leadership contenders protest too much over devolution legislation. Yes, in principle, big constitutional changes ought to undergo lengthy and severe debate. But all Labour wants to do is set a process of consulting the people of Scotland and Wales; there will be scope for substantive questioning later of the means by which they are to have a bigger say in governing themselves. Besides, it will become the Tories to complain, at least until they have expired, over a few months, 18 years' casual use and abuse of parliamentary supremacy. The Tories need to be listened to on parliamentary democracy. But not on this issue, and not yet.

Green tax rebate on the empties

Sir: You report (3 June) that the number of miles travelled by empty lorries in 1996 was 28.7 per cent of the total for all journeys by these vehicles. Although an improvement over previous years, this is still a scandalously high figure.

In the Netherlands, all soft-drink containers are regularly returned to shops for a refund of the tax on the container. Nearly all such containers (glass and plastic bottles, as well as cans) attract this tariff. The 'deposit' on a bottle of beer, for instance, is often twice the value of the contents, thus encouraging people to return any empty containers they come across.

These 'empties' are passed on up the supply chain by retailers, through wholesalers, either back to the original manufacturer for reuse, or for recycling. Whenever a truck makes a delivery to a shop, it takes away the returned empty packaging.

A welcome spin-off is a reduction in street litter. Sharp-eyed children (and others) soon start retrieving and redeeming containers discarded by their more careless or selfish peers.

The Labour administration should emulate the Dutch model.

MIKE STEELE
London SE4

Saving lives on the gay scene

Sir: John Lyttle writes: 'Rubber-stuffers still haunt Hampstead Heath handing out condoms' (article, 30 May); in fact Rubber-stuffers have never given out a single condom on the Heath. What Rubber-stuffers provides is appropriate condoms in places where gay men are most likely to access them, namely gay venues.

He suggests that handing out condoms is 'a waste of money' – not so. The cost of condom distribution to gay men (who make up the majority of new HIV infections) is far overshadowed by condom distribution to people whose risk of HIV is minimal through, say, family planning services or GP clinics.

An NHS-commissioned report (in March 1997) concludes: 'Provision of condoms... should target high-risk groups, especially male homosexuals, purely on cost grounds'.

That's why we will carry on 'haunting' the gay scene, ensuring that gay men receive practical advice and information on preventing HIV transmission.

CHRIS MARKHAM
Director, RS Health
London W1

All depends

Sir: The headline 'Blair vows to end culture of dependency' (2 June) is a striking example of the onward march of a word which, having noticed that its imperial shelf life (dependency: a colony without self-government) was coming to an end, has adopted in an almost Darwinian way to usurp the previously dominant position occupied by 'dependence'. Will we soon find ourselves talking about your distinguished newspaper's having asserted its independence?

Professor DAVID HEAD
Department of Modern Languages
University of Northumbria at Newcastle



low-pollution proposition. Stringent town and city centre pollution limits would drive bus operators into replacing diesel stock with low to zero emission vehicles.

We now have a government that places human welfare above market forces. It is also pledged to an integrated transport policy with an environmental thrust. This must include direct and indirect legislative pressure on manufacturers. If it can happen in the US, how much more should it be possible here.

Professor PETER F SMITH
Chairman, Environment and Planning Committee
Royal Institute of British Architects
London W1

Sir: So cars are not a problem in rural areas (letter, 3 June)?

All those 'minute contributions' to global warming add up to a catastrophic problem. If all those (genuinely) rural people in developing countries start adding their 'minute contributions', heaven help us.

Rural motorists impose other substantial costs, in noise and in danger and unpleasantness. Many country lanes that 30 years ago had negligible traffic have become de-ruralised roads with several cars speeding past every minute.

Children can no longer wander free and lonely but instead, to quote your letter-writer, 'two cars are essential... for... the social lives of our young children'.

The priceless qualities of the countryside, its tranquillity and freedom from unnatural sounds, are eroded by motorists in rural areas. They must be heavily taxed accordingly.

ROBERT P CLARKE
Newbury, Berkshire

Of course public transport must also be made an attractive and ultra-

Si: There is a simple strategy for Glenda Jackson to consider ("Fewer car journeys urged to cut down the smog", 31 May). Raising the age for holding a driving licence would significantly reduce the number of recreational car users. There would be added benefit for road safety, because young drivers are statistically the most dangerous, and increased walking might even improve youth fitness.

There would be minimal political cost because by the time we reached an election, the disgruntled generation of carefree teenagers would have become old enough to drive. Add to this the reduction on parental stress because 17-year-olds would not be demanding a car for Christmas and you have a politically perfect policy.

Dr CHRIS WILLIAMS
School of Education
The University of Birmingham

Budget today

Sir: After his lounge suit innovation, Gordon Brown is planning to ditch Gladstone's red Budget box in favour of something a bit more up to date. A briefcase has been mooted. This would be very old hat. Why doesn't he go the whole hog and hold up a CD-Rom disk in front of No 11 on Budget Day? Better still, stay inside and send out the Budget by e-mail or video conference.

PAUL WALTER
Newbury, Berkshire

All of these schemes have helped to develop an outstanding

Money to pay for GPs' surgeries

Sir: Dr A C Markus (Letters, 28 May) does not paint the full picture about fund-holding and GP surgeries.

In the remuneration system for GPs there have been provisions for more than 30 years for the state to make contributions towards the capital cost of GP surgeries. The two main schemes are known as the Cost Rent Scheme, where GPs receive what amounts to an interest-free loan to provide premises, and the Improvement Grant Scheme, where grants of between a third and two-thirds of the cost of improving surgeries are made available. Incidentally, both schemes were introduced by a progressive Labour minister of health: Kenneth Robinson. Over the past few years, under arrangements to encourage the development of GP surgeries in parts of London, grants of up to 90 per cent have been made available, usually to non-fundholding GPs.

Money for such schemes has been short recently. Therefore we should welcome the ability of those fund-holders who make savings to redirect them to improving the premises and services that are provided for their patients, thus releasing limited resources for other capital developments.

All of these schemes have helped to develop an outstanding

range of GP surgeries for fund-holders, non-fund-holders and patients in many parts of the country. We should welcome this rather than resort to pointscoring.

CLIVE PARR
General Manager
National Association of Fundholding Practices
London W1

Rays of hope for Welsh valleys

Sir: Tony Heath's interview with Peter Hain, the Welsh Office minister ("Hope in the Valleys", 30 May), is very timely. As MP for Neath, Mr Hain has been playing a leading part in the new thinking around the community and economic regeneration of the South Wales valleys and now has a unique opportunity to implement his plans for 'industrial villages'.

Crucial in this new thinking is the inclusive nature of the developing strategy: in our case the Dulas Valley Strategy, involving all the sectors of the local communities.

The creation of a Welsh Assembly is but a larger version of the local democratic partnerships which have been emerging across Wales in recent years.

It is very important that the new Welsh Office and hopefully the new Welsh Assembly ensures that an environment is created in which this sense of democratic civic participation prospers: the private sector locates beyond South-east Wales – in the valleys and in rural

North and West Wales; and a culture of lifelong learning becomes an essential human right for the rebuilding of Welsh, British and European societies.

The abolition of the nursery voucher system, an early referendum for a Welsh Assembly, new opportunities for education and training and the rejoining of Unesco are a tangible resurgence of hope for the valleys and the world beyond.

Professor HYWEL FRANCIS
Chair, Dulas Valley Partnership
Seven Sisters, Neath

Forgotten teeth

Sir: There is indeed a simple explanation of why Alec Just (Letters, 29 May) is unable to remember cleaning his teeth, but can recollect if there is any coffee remaining in his mug. Cleaning the teeth is not necessary for survival; drinking a liquid is.

A further explanation lies in the difference between duty and pleasure. The former we are always keen to forget; the latter, hopefully, we always remember.

JUDITH HOLMES
Harleston, Norfolk

Sir: I must thank Dr Peter Davies for his kind explanation of my husband's memory problem (letters, 29 and 30 May).

He has now provided the perfect excuse for delay by the said husband of the completion of the many household tasks that await him, and I can certainly confirm the theory that after 24 hours there is indeed no danger of task recall!

JENNY JUST
Bushey, Hertfordshire

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

analysis

Q: What do Rwanda, Yemen, Palestine, Cambodia and Fiji have in common? A: They all want to fly the Commonwealth flag

Far from being a ragged remnant of the British Empire, the organisation is fast becoming an influential player on the world stage, writes Paul Vallely

It is perhaps the most singular legacy of the long retreat from Empire. When Britain pulls out of Hong Kong at the end of the month this largest of our remaining dependencies, since it is not to become an independent state, will be ineligible to join the Commonwealth. At the same time the decidedly un-British state of Rwanda is lobbying to join, as is Yemen, which at least contains the former British protectorate of Aden. The Palestinians have indicated that they, too, might apply to join, if and when they become a sovereign state. And Fiji, suspended after the 1987 coup there, has approached Commonwealth officials about not only rejoining but abandoning its status as a republic and, uniquely, petitioning the Queen to reassume her role as monarch.

And that is not all. There is talk that Nigeria, which after the coup in Sierra Leone has been posturing without a trace of irony, as the defendant of democracy in West Africa, may be expelled from the Commonwealth at the heads of government summit in Edinburgh later this year for its continued contempt for democracy and human rights.

The eight members of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on human rights, which was set up last year following the Nigerian military regime's execution of the dissident Ken Saro-Wiwa, along with eight other activists, is becoming impatient. The group, led by Nelson Mandela - who swiftly brought post-apartheid South Africa back into the Commonwealth fold - has backed away from the idea of economic sanctions against the country for fear that the Americans, French, Chinese and Russians would

not come on board. But it is now considering expulsion for its continued flouting of Commonwealth demands.

"The Commonwealth is taking on a new visible life," says Andrew Porter, an imperial historian at King's College, London. "And for good reasons of self-interest. You might not set it up if it didn't already exist, but it's there and it can be mobilised and its networks used to promote the interests of what is now a quarter of the world's population."

It is an odd business for those who regard the Commonwealth merely as some ragged remnant of Empire, a hangover from the days when penes were struck with a groundswell of its own people, who continued to celebrate the birthdays of the Queen and other royals, and whose students continued to apply for - and receive - scholarships from the 1100 Commonwealth awards made every year.

By contrast, cutting self-interest lurks behind the urge of the élite in Rwanda to join. Many observers detect a "futsi plot" behind the move. The Rwandan rulers are English-speaking Tutsis who were previously exiled among fellow Tutsis in neighbouring Uganda; joining the Anglophone Commonwealth would subtly consolidate their position over the

Anglophone one now. In 1995, the first non-English speaking country, the former Portuguese colony of Mozambique, was admitted on the same day that Nigeria was suspended. Insiders say it was the price which Mandela exacted in return for taking the lead on Nigeria from the white Commonwealth states, who were reluctant to push the matter for fear of charges of racism.

The success of the institution is clear from the queue to join. Motives to do so vary. Sentiment seems to be what lies behind the Fijian request for re-admission. Gérald Sitiveni Rabuka, who led the 1987 coup, has been pressed into negotiations by a groundswell of his own people, who continued to celebrate the birthdays of the Queen and other royals, and whose students continued to apply for - and receive - scholarships from the 1100 Commonwealth awards made every year.

It is an odd business for those who regard the Commonwealth merely as some ragged remnant of Empire, a hangover from the days when penes were struck with a groundswell of its own people, who continued to celebrate the birthdays of the Queen and other royals, and whose students continued to apply for - and receive - scholarships from the 1100 Commonwealth awards made every year.

French-speaking Hutu majority they now control. Elsewhere, in Barbados, fervent republicans campaigning to ditch the Queen as head of state are none the less anxious the island should remain in the Commonwealth.

The formula for that well-established. Half of the current members are now republics, under an ingenious formulation whereby the Queen ceases to be monarch but remains as head of the Commonwealth. It is no longer the British Commonwealth. The qualifying adjective was dropped in the late Forties to allow India to remain in the white man's club - of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia - after its independence as a republic. (Ireland dropped out only weeks before the prescription came into force.) The imperial residue was further dissipated in 1965 when Britain gave up the permanent chairmanship and an independent secretariat was set up making the organisation, which then had 21 members, more difficult for London to manipulate.

Evidence of that lack of malleability was disclosed recently when the first confidential Commonwealth papers were released under a 30-year secrecy rule. During the row over the Ulster Declaration of Independence by Rhodesia's white settler regime, the Commonwealth came close to falling apart. London insisted on economic sanctions to end the crisis, while black Africa demanded that Britain send in troops. At one point the British prime minister, Harold Wilson, pointed out that all the countries at the table had gained their independence from Britain but were now overlooking the fact that Britain, too, was independent. Other members were treating Britain "as if it were a bloody colony". When the other prime ministers protested vehemently and asked him to withdraw the remark, Wilson, the minutes show, said: "All right, I withdraw the word 'bloody'."

There was a time when it seemed the Commonwealth would wither on the vine of Britain's increased involvement with Europe. In the years after the war the notion of imperial or Commonwealth trade preferences was still considered viable. But by the Sixties, Britain began to feel it could not afford to be tied in with

economies which were not among the most vigorous in the world. Cheap New Zealand lamb and butter were not sufficient recompence for exclusion from the Common Market being set up in Europe.

In the early days Wilson tried to have it both ways, asking for admittance to the Common Market with a tariff-free zone that would remain open to the developing world, and which would not artificially raise food prices. He reckoned without the intransigence of General de Gaulle, who vetoed the application. It was only, in effect, by dropping all its objections that Britain was admitted in 1972, accepting both the Common External Tariff and the Common Agricultural Policy - and additionally surrendering its fishing grounds, something which the other members previously would not have dared to demand. Not long after the trade preferences went, UK visa requirements were introduced for Commonwealth citizens.

If entry into the Common Market hugely damaged relations with the white Commonwealth, it was the intransigence of Margaret Thatcher over sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa which placed the greatest strain on relations with black members.

During the Thatcher years it repeatedly looked as if the Commonwealth would be allowed to atrophy by an impious British prime minister who would brook no contrar-

ation from former colonials. Commonwealth leaders roundly outraged her. Much influenced by her businessman husband Denis, she embraced dictatorial African leaders like Moi in Kenya and Banda in Malawi, and adopted a pro-Butchiezi and anti-ANC line in South Africa. At one Commonwealth conference in Vancouver she compared the ANC with the IRA, hypocritically ignoring the difference between the violence of a violent minority outvoted in a democratic country and that of a disenfranchised majority inside a repressive state. Such attitudes, along with her decision to abolish education subsidies for overseas students, led to widespread disillusion with Britain. At one point there was talk of moving the Commonwealth Secretariat to Toronto. The rifts were healed only by diligent backroom diplomacy by the Queen, as Ben Pimlott's biography of the monarch reveals.

Yet the institution survived all this for a number of reasons. It creates an unparalleled forum in which the prime ministers of 52 states have direct personal contact with one another, often without any officials present. Because it is not a strategic alliance or a trading bloc it has no common defence or economic policies. It is a forum rather than a united front, where consensus rather than voting are the *modus operandi*. "That may well be why it may be on the threshold of new influence," says Dr Alan Sked.

"Smaller members fear the sense of intimacy will be lost," says Andrew Porter. (An approach from Cambodia has been politely rebuffed; and suggestions that Ireland might rejoin as part of the Ulster peace process have foundered on the fact that - though the country's president, Mary Robinson, has privately told the Commonwealth Secretary-General that "the Irish people have a deep affinity with the things you do" - the symbolic resonance would be too much for many republicans.) But there is no doubt that, with its intimate links to all corners of the globe, the Commonwealth is well placed to play an important role on the world stage in the next century - as a forum in which to moot international initiatives, a mechanism to further democracy and human rights and as a discreet vehicle for crisis diplomacy.

In Hong Kong, the first Chinese successor to the last British governor has invited the Secretary-General, Chief Emeke Anyaoku, to the band-over celebrations. The new chief executive hopes, apparently, that some of the informal connections with Commonwealth associations might be maintained, even though Hong Kong will never qualify for membership. The gesture has gone largely unnoticed as part of the small change of international diplomacy. But as a testament to the potency of the Commonwealth in the post-imperial world it carries its own significance.



Going native in a roundabout sort of way

Most Americans don't know much about the world. That, at least, is what we like to think. As Martin Bell said on the radio the other day, a country where the OJ Simpson trial was thought for about a year to be top news cannot be a country where news is taken seriously. And it seems self-evident that most Americans cannot know much about the world because more than half of them do not possess passports and therefore cannot even go and have a look at the world.

By these standards Raymond Seitz, until lately American ambassador to the UK and now doing a series of talks on Radio 4, is the kind of American you dread meeting. He is urbane, interesting, amusing and well-informed, and thus destroys all your favourite images of the American male as loud, competitive and ignorant of anywhere but America. Foreigners are generally the most perceptive observers of other countries - the most revered book on America is still that by the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville - and

some Americans who pop up on Radio 4 I think of Mr Michael Goldfarb) are pretty thought-provoking on the UK.

But I am puzzled by something that Mr Seitz said this very Monday. He said that of all the odd things in our traffic system it was not driving on the left or anything else that baffled him most - it was roundabouts. He could not see the point of roundabouts. Americans do not have roundabouts. They have other ways of organising traffic beside these strange nodal things like blood clots in the arterial system called roundabouts, with their mysterious protocol and infallible clogging effect.

Why do we do it? Is it a hangover from a classical past, the past that gave us circles and crescents? Is it something to do with our class system, all this giving way and doffing of caps? Is it because Americans are optimists and progress in a straight line, whereas the British are realists who have seen it all before and therefore think cyclically?

through gallons of coffee, leaving lots of coffee mugs on the master plans, each one of which was painfully turned into a roundabout.)

The simple truth, I think, is that we have so many roundabouts in Britain because they are cheap to build. When a local council has a trouble spot where they should introduce traffic lights or a pedestrian crossing, they will often find that it is half a million pounds cheaper to form a small bump in the middle of the road, paint a few white lines round it and put up signs saying NEW ROAD SCHEME AHEAD.

This compares favourably with the equivalent scheme in Mr Seitz's homeland, where priority at a crossing goes to the man with the bigger gun, especially if he shoots his rival first. The American scheme may be cheaper, but the British scheme causes fewer deaths. Though I do think fondly of the *Punch* cartoon by I think, Raymond Lowry, which showed the end of a motorway and a large sign

saying EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC SCHEME AHEAD. After passing the sign, all the cars followed the road to a cliff and poured over the top into the sea. Excellent idea!

Nevertheless, Mr Seitz is certainly right in pointing to the fact that we have a different driving culture from country to country. Indeed, it varies from region to region. When I first moved out of London, I couldn't help noticing that people were much more lackadaisical (I would now call it relaxed) in the country - no revving up at red lights, ready for a hint of green. They are also much more courteous, ever ready to reverse down a country lane to the last passing place and to thank each other for having done so, indeed to thank each other for thanking each other.

The only place where I was ever in a car which came to a large roundabout with a grass mound in the middle and drove straight up it and across the top was Ireland. More about the reasons for this weird episode tomorrow.

GIVENCHY

ORGANZA

NOW DISCOVER
THE NEW PERFUMED BATH LINE

كذا من الأدلة

France

is clever, produc-

tion

هذا من الأصل

The cautionary tale of Labour's last moderniser

Newness and energy. Daily surprises. Political chic, and a bit of political cheek as well. The first hectic month of the new government has been heartening and invigorating. We have known nothing quite like it before.

Except that we have. Labour's repetitive and passionate rhetoric of newness discourages any looking back, certainly to old Labour history. Yet if there are ghosts in Downing Street, surely the shadow of a young man in shirt-sleeves, podgy dapper and full of energy, is hovering there now. What would Harold Wilson have made of recent weeks?

For there are some striking parallels with the last time Labour ended a long period of Conservative rule, in 1964. Like Blair now, Wilson was then the youngest Prime Minister of the century, brimming with the rhetoric of renewal and modernity. His moral-patriotic rhetoric wasn't so far from Blair's: "No-one should be in a political party unless he believes that party represents his own highest religious and moral ideas."

He started in office with a great gust of goodwill from voters, the media and his own party. He began well: Paul Foot's account, written shortly after the first 1964-66 administration, says that the vast majority of Labour people and commentators thought Wilson's first 17 months "had been almost impeccable". Scepticism was confined to "satirists and sectarians". Above all, the young Prime Minister was fizzing with enthusiasm and optimism.

Here is Sir Derek Mitchell, Wilson's principal private secretary, describing the new PM's first hours: "Within minutes we got down to it. He didn't even bother to meet the civil servants before preparing the list of ministers". He showed no sign of tiredness: more of demonic energy, excitement, fulfilment." Familiar?

Journalists who covered Wilson's first few months recall brilliant, relentless, news management - "a splash a day". In government, Wilson used his knowledge of the Press players to great effect. Spin-doctoring was a well understood art in the Downing Street of 1964. Like Blair, Wilson introduced a team of policy wonks (as they then weren't called), fixers and personal political allies into Downing Street. Instead of Alastair Campbell, Peter Mandelson, Jonathan Powell and the rest, he had Marcia Williams, George Wigg, Gerald Kaufman, and Thomas Balogh.

The new Prime Ministerial team meant friction with senior civil servants - the disagreement between the Cabinet Secretary and Blair over Powell's role today can be compared with Marcia Williams's fight for official status in 1964 - but also injected adrenaline into government. As Ben Pimlott puts it in his biography of Wilson: "The contrast between the hectic pace of the new administration, compared with the relaxed atmosphere of the old one, was the most marked feature of the change."

Wilson's power in Downing Street was circumscribed a little by his wary respect for a few other ministers with big Labour Party constituencies. George Brown, as the working-class man with an unconventional image and big ideas about industrial regeneration, would be played now by John Prescott, though Prescott has no drinking problem - it is hard to imagine him sauntering down the steps of



Andrew Marr

Blair should constantly ask himself why Harold Wilson, a popular and energetic leader, became so unpopular and cut off, so quickly

history is that there were three huge differences between 1964 and 1997. First, Wilson inherited an economic crisis, while Blair inherits merely problems. Second, Wilson had a majority of four, not 17. Third, he was in a lock to a union-dominated party, as Blair isn't.

These are rather formidable distinctions. Yet though Wilson was struggling with much tougher economic and international conditions than Blair, his experience is similar enough to him while remembering.

Above all, Blair should constantly ask himself why such a popular, energetic and liked leader became so unpopular and cut off, so quickly. Downing Street does things to people - to Thatcher and Major, too, though Wilson remains the best example. He shut up the doors, stuck with what eventually became a paranoid circle of allies, obsessed with the treachery of colleagues. He didn't spend enough time with the half-dozen or so senior ministers who really mattered. He worked too hard. He lost his sense of proportion, and then of fun.

I wonder what an older, wiser, ghost of Wilson would say to Tony Blair today? "Well done", of course. He'd be awed by, and jealous of, the Commons majority, and admiring of Blair's party reforms. But he would also say:

"Relax. Don't fret over newspaper stories about ambitious colleagues, or allow courtiers to involve you in plotting. Spend time with family and utterly non-political friends. Don't make a fetish of frantic activity. A few months of good headlines are a great achievement for any Labour politician in this country. But keeping sane for years ahead - that is a Herculean task, which very few of your predecessors have managed."

"And - oh yes, one other thing. Don't confuse patriotism with Sterling. A strong pound is a very mixed blessing."

his plane in a foreign capital and "kissing each wife in the formal embassy reception party ardently on the lips".

Roy Jenkins, who wasn't in that first cabinet, and Jim Callaghan, might be played by Gordon Brown and Robin Cook, who also have big alternative bases in the party and only a very modest store of mutual admiration.

Finally, Wilson, too, took big decisions early on: within days he ruled out devaluation as a way of coping with the huge balance of payments deficit, so committing his government to painful and highly unpopular austerity measures.

Blair hasn't done anything quite on that scale - in today's terms, it would be rather like committing us to membership of the first wave of EMU. But as a reorganisation of government, Gordon Brown's change to the status of the Bank of England can be compared in grandness to his namesake's 1964 creation of a Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).

The DEA and National Plan should also remind us that the Blair government's co-option of people from Barclays, BP and British Airways to help in government isn't new either. As he explained in his memoirs, George Brown brought in a whole range of Conservative City types and industrialists from companies like Courtaulds, Unilever and Shell, and even a sitting Tory MP as head of the Prices and Incomes Board.

The best retort to all this history

is that there were three huge

differences between 1964 and 1997. First, Wilson

inherited merely problems. Second, Wilson

had a majority of four, not 17. Third, he was in

a lock to a union-dominated party, as Blair isn't.

These are rather formidable distinctions. Yet though Wilson was struggling with much tougher economic and international conditions than Blair, his experience is similar enough to him while remembering.

Above all, Blair should constantly ask himself why such a popular, energetic and liked leader became so unpopular and cut off, so quickly. Downing Street does things to people - to Thatcher and Major, too, though Wilson remains the best example. He shut up the doors, stuck with what eventually became a paranoid circle of allies, obsessed with the treachery of colleagues. He didn't spend enough time with the half-dozen or so senior ministers who really mattered. He worked too hard. He lost his sense of proportion, and then of fun.

I wonder what an older, wiser, ghost of Wilson would say to Tony Blair today? "Well done", of course. He'd be awed by, and jealous of, the Commons majority, and admiring of Blair's party reforms. But he would also say:

"Relax. Don't fret over newspaper stories about ambitious colleagues, or allow courtiers to involve you in plotting. Spend time with family and utterly non-political friends. Don't make a fetish of frantic activity. A few months of good headlines are a great achievement for any Labour politician in this country. But keeping sane for years ahead - that is a Herculean task, which very few of your predecessors have managed."

"And - oh yes, one other thing. Don't confuse patriotism with Sterling. A strong pound is a very mixed blessing."

Wilson's power in Downing Street was circumscribed a little by his wary respect for a few other ministers with big Labour Party constituencies. George Brown, as the working-class man with an unconventional image and big ideas about industrial regeneration, would be played now by John Prescott, though Prescott has no drinking problem - it is hard to imagine him sauntering down the steps of

the House of Commons.

France still has a place in the sun

It's clever, productive and fashionable - don't write the country off yet, says Hamish McRae



Top spot: resorts such as St Tropez make tourism the second biggest industry

Post-election France: the commentators seem to have decided that the country has turned its back on economic reform and will now condemn itself to a further five years of stagnation. Unemployment will stay high, consumers will remain depressed; and whether or not the euro ever happens, the economy will remain burdened by high taxation, a bloated social welfare system and continued social unrest.

But economic bottlenecks are usually half as well as half empty. If, instead of focusing on the structural changes that France is finding it so tough to make, you look instead at the fundamental strengths and weaknesses of the French economy, a rather different prospect emerges. To see this, start with the tough question that any rich, developed country should ask: what can this country do that other countries with much cheaper labour cannot do as well or better? The answer, in the case of France, is: quite a lot.

In a world where manufacturing know-how crosses national boundaries in a matter of weeks, comparative advantage will lie less in the size or competitiveness of a country's manufacturing, and much more in qualities such as intellect and culture: how clever people are; how attractive their culture is to other nations. Basic, mass manufacturing will continue to shift to low-wage countries, leaving two types of production in high-wage ones: those that have a high design content, and those with a high craft content. Apart from that, the growth in developed country economies will be in services.

Looked at in this light, France has many advantages. So whatever the humps that the French economy will encounter during the next five years of cohabitation with a president of the right and a government of the left, the longer-term outlook for the economy through the first couple of decades of the next century is rather more encouraging than the present deluge of gloomy comments may suggest.

Let's list the strengths, and see how they dovetail with the sort of things that the world is likely

to spend more money on during the next 25 years. Tourism is France's second biggest industry. This is enormously important, for, if defined widely to include travel, tourism has now become the world's largest industry and its largest source of employment growth. France has a clear competitive advantage, partly because of its location at the centre of Europe, but also because of the variety of experiences it offers: from the beaches of St Tropez to the boulevard of St Michel. This is not an area in which France is likely to suffer from competition from countries such as South Korea or Japan, as it will in, say, cars and computers. Tokyo is an extraordinarily interesting city, but it will never be a holiday destination like Paris. Next, Paris itself. The Ile de France region - greater Paris - generates higher gross added value than any other region in Europe and produces

about 30 per cent of France's GDP. There is some danger in this, in that the country may have too many of its economic eggs in one basket. But it is a great centre of clever people: 47 per cent of its employed people are engineers, executives, technicians or supervisors, and most of the rest are skilled; only 13 per cent of its workers are unskilled. The visitor sees the glitz, but would not appreciate that about half of the country's jobs in aerospace, pharmaceuticals, data processing and electronics are in greater Paris. He or she would not know, either, that productivity in these areas is generally higher than anywhere else in Europe.

Paris is also the leading European conference centre, well ahead of London, and has more than double as many visitors to trade fairs and exhibitions than any other European city. The blend

of providing an efficient location for a business conference and a tourist destination is particularly powerful.

Finally, Paris dominates the luxury goods trade. Here is a clear area where France has global leadership. That leadership in fashion has enabled Paris to retain a large clothing industry, located in the Sentier district close to Les Halles, one of the few very manufacturing industries still in the centre of a giant city. Physical proximity to the market offsets the higher costs involved. But, of course, the strength in luxury goods goes far beyond clothing: there is a string of top global brand names in drink, perfume and related industries. France, perhaps to an even greater extent than the UK, has been adept at crafting high-end products that are attractive to the newly rich of East Asia.

There are other areas in which France will remain globally important. Obviously it will remain a big food producer; it will remain, albeit the world's second or third largest arms exporter. Trade in food seems likely to increase over the next generation, along with the increase in population; and, sadly, it would be surprising were trade in arms to diminish significantly.

It would be astounding if, over the next generation, the process of globalisation that has dominated the last 30 years, and particularly the last 15, were to go into reverse. In France globalisation is often resented, even feared, for it is perceived as a threat to the French way of managing things. It is tied up with resentment of the force of Anglo-Saxon culture and what are seen as Anglo-Saxon market reforms.

But in reality France - with its excellent high technology and its craft industries, and with its powerful, exportable culture - seems better placed to profit from globalisation than countries that are just pre-eminent as manufacturers. France is often seen as the weaker partner in the Franco-German alliance, but on a 25-year view its economy may be better placed to compete globally than its more populous neighbour.

The sweet and sour times of Alan Sugar

by Michael Harrison



that specialised in selling PCs direct rather than through high street retailers.

Amstrad will be remembered as much for the man as for its best-selling product. Mr Sugar left school at 17 and after a short spell as a statistician in the Department of Education, branched out on his own. The son of an East End tailor, he was a loner at school with a love of cooking and photography. They were not obviously the best credentials for him to make his way as a trader in the rough and tumble of the East End markets but Mr Sugar quickly demonstrated his acumen for making money. Within four years of forming Amstrad, the business was making nearly £200,000 profit a year on sales of £1.3m.

Today he has all the trappings of wealth - a Rolls-Royce with the personalised number-plate AMS1 and a 160ft yacht, the *Louisiana* - but his pugnacious, impetuous, back-of-a-lorry style of doing business has scarcely changed. And he still inspires fear and awe in equal measure among those he employs. He also inspires great loyalty. Many of his managers at Amstrad, known collectively as Sugarlumps, aped his appearance - the stubby beard, bulldog expression and free flow of expletives.

Now Mr Sugar says he wants to devote his energies to football. At Spurs, his relationship with supporters and shareholders has been the mirror image of that he cultivated at Amstrad. The shareholders love him for turning the club's precarious finances around. The fans, or at least a vocal minority, loathe him for Spurs' lack of success on the field. Mr Sugar's disdain for paying high prices for "foreign mercenaries" or "Carlos Kickabouts" as he has dubbed them is well known. In a reversal of his individualistic business philosophy, he says no one player is going to win the Premier League. Rather, composing a football team is like assembling a business. "It's like a manufacturer who has laid down the plant, put the machines in place, finished the designs and now everything is ready to roll," he recently said of Spurs.

Yesterday, with unfortunate timing, one of its most important pieces of machinery - the star striker Teddy Sheringham - stuck in a transfer request, apparently disillusioned with Mr Sugar's style of negotiating new contracts. Who says life at Spurs will be any easier than running Amstrad?

LOOK OUT!
CLOSE ON-COUNTERS
of the ale kind. Mysterious,
smooth talking stranger seen
in the bar. Was it a UFA?
Contact Moulder Box 1824.

FOUNDERS
FLAVOUR WORTH FINDING

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098

BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Strikes threat as construction workers reject pay offer

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

The recovery in the construction industry could be under threat from nation-wide strikes after union negotiators yesterday rejected a 45 per cent increase in basic pay over four years.

It is understood that prestige projects in London and the South-east, where union membership is at its highest, could be the main targets for disruption on any hit-list. They are

likely to be the millennium site at Greenwich, the new Tate Gallery at Bankside Power Station in London, the £100m refurbishment of the Royal Opera House and the construction of the Jubilee Underground line. The bypass at Newbury could also be the subject of disruption.

If the unrest spreads into the general building trade the acute shortage of housing could be made considerably worse.

Allan Black, national officer for the construction industry at

the GMB general union, said talks had broken down and there was no immediate prospect of further negotiations. He said building workers would be extremely anxious when they realised there would be no wage increase by the end of this month — the due settlement date.

"We are sleepwalking into industrial action," he said yesterday at his union's annual conference in Brighton.

While national pay negotia-

tions had little impact on real wage rates in previous years because many workers were self-employed, tighter implementation of tax laws has led to thousands of craftsmen moving to employed status. Union negotiators insist on inflation-busting rises to make up for the fact that more of their members are being forced to pay tax.

Union leaders are also keen to exploit the scarcity of skilled labour which has seen the going rates for steel fixers in Lon-

don rise to £600 for a five-day week and the wages of bricklayers increased to £400.

Mr Black estimated only 10 per cent of the 800,000 workers in the construction industry are union members but he predicted that even non-unionised personnel would walk out.

In negotiations employers amended their offer from a four-year package to a three-year deal said to be worth 32 per cent but union negotiators rejected it.

The final proposal, turned down by employees' representatives, was said to be worth 5 per cent from the end of this month, 14 per cent from June next year and 10 per cent in the following year, taking hourly pay rates from £4.58 to basic craft operatives to £6.05.

Rival union UCATT argued that the main bone of contention was not so much the pay offer, but the insistence of the Construction Confederation, the employers' body, on

flexibility of working hours. The confederation wants to negotiate a "derogation" from a European directive which stipulates that employees should not work more than 48 hours a week averaged over four months.

Employers wanted working time to be calculated over 12 months.

Malcolm Fordy, chairman of the employers' side, said the proposals constituted a "wide-ranging, positive and constructive" response to union

aspirations. It would encourage training and reward the attainment of skills, thus improving the status of the industry and its public image.

"To our very great regret the trade union side rejected our offer. I must make it clear that no further concessions will be made by the employers," he said.

Mr Fordy confirmed that no further meetings had been arranged and that present pay rates would remain in force.

Sugar breaks Amstrad empire

Michael Harrison

According to some estimates the break-up and distribution of assets could be worth 360p per share against yesterday's closing price of 27p, up 13.5p. That would value Amstrad at £425m compared with a market capitalisation of £1.2bn in 1988 and leave Mr Sugar with a stake worth about £145m.

However, much will depend on the value put on Viglen when it is floated as a separate company. There were suggestions yesterday that it could be worth as much as 115p a share although Robert Harris, an analyst with ABN Amro Hoare Govett, put Viglen's value at 65p a share. The company made a £1.5m profit last year on sales of £106m.

Mr Sugar, Amstrad's biggest shareholder with a 34 per cent stake, refused to say what he would do with his proceeds from the break-up. But he stressed that although the Amstrad name was disappearing as a quoted company it would continue as a powerful brand.

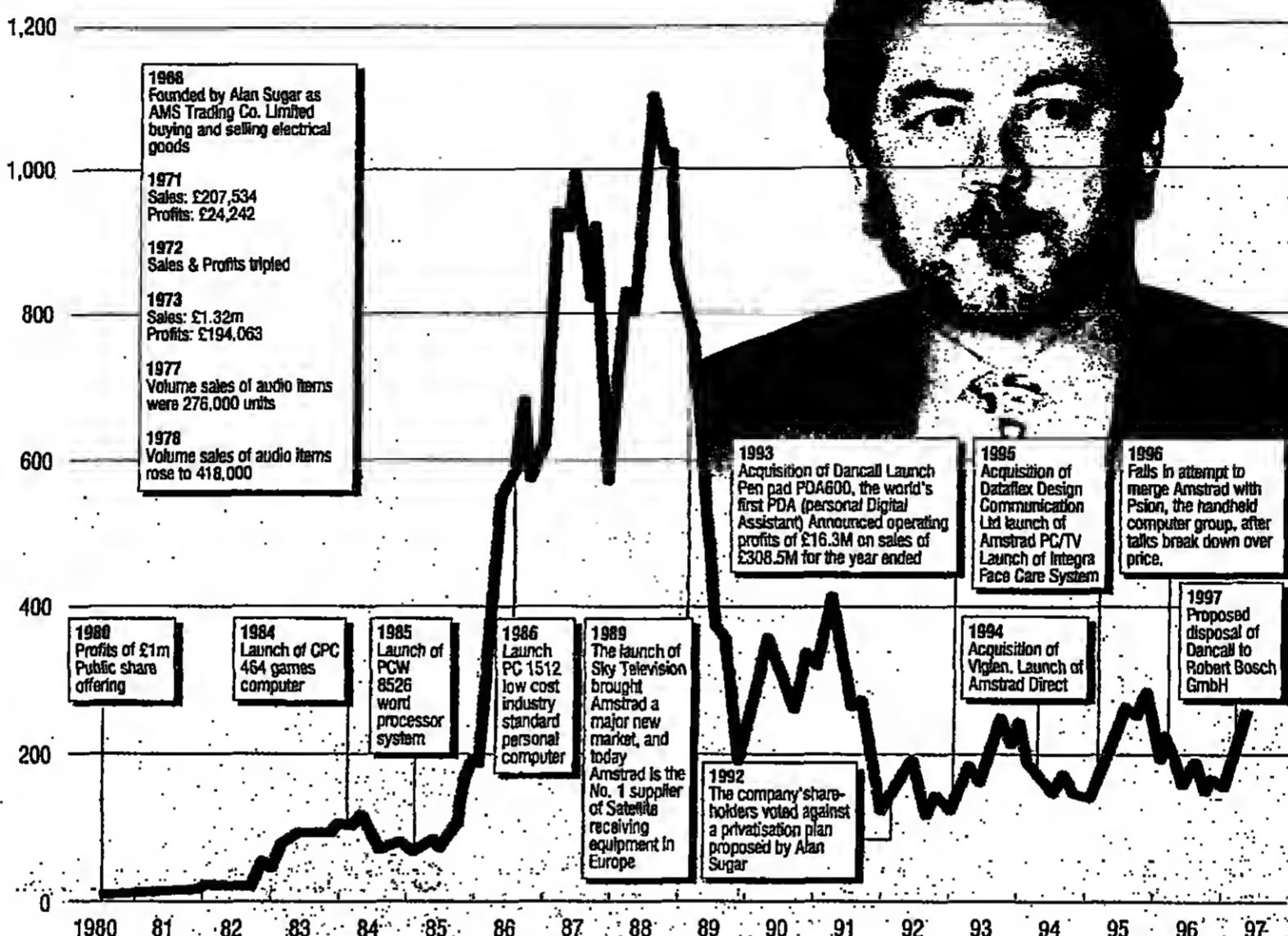
Mr Sugar will remain chairman of Betacom and will devote his energies to building up the business. But he will have no executive role at Viglen while Amstrad will be reduced to acting as a vehicle to pursue the litigation in the US.

"My focus will now be on Betacom which is where Amstrad was as a company 10 years ago," Mr Sugar said. "In years to come a suitable epitaph would be for Betacom to prove as sexy a market as Amstrad." The dramatic break up of the Amstrad follows Mr Sugar's failure to merge the business last year with Psion, the hand-held computer group, and his earlier abortive attempt in 1992 to take Amstrad private.

Analysts generally welcomed

The rise and fall of Alan Michael Sugar Trading

Amstrad share price pence



the break-up plan unveiled by Mr Sugar. Michael Styles of Crédit Lyonnais said: "It makes sense. There may be a little more to go on the share price — it depends what you think Viglen is worth."

Mr Sugar formed Amstrad — Alan Michael Sugar Trading — in 1968 and built its profits up to £1m by mass marketing hi-fi equipment manufactured in the Far East at discount prices. It floated in 1980 and quickly went into the computer business, first

with games computers, then with word processors and then with a low-cost industry standard personal computer which revolutionised the PC market.

Amstrad hit a peak in 1988 as its profits reached £160m and the market capitalisation of the company hit £1.2bn. It went on to sign a deal with Rupert Murdoch's Sky to manufacture and market its satellite dishes in 1989.

The downturn in the company's fortunes coincided with its attempts to break into the busi-

ness PC market with a machine using disk drives supplied by two US manufacturers.

Amstrad was last month awarded £57.6m in damages against one of the companies — Seagate Technologies and is pursuing a similar claim against Western Digital, which is due to reach court in Orange County, California later this year.

The £200m loan note convertible into cash is worth 163p a share and represents the bulk of Amstrad's cash pile, which has

just been inflated by the £92m sale of the cellular telephone business, Dancall to Bosch of Germany.

Amstrad's 70 per cent holding in Betacom is worth a further 25p a share and assuming the Seagate damages award reaches £100m, it is worth a further 55p-58p per share.

Although Amstrad will cease to exist as a quoted company a spokesman said: "It doesn't matter a damn to the consumer who now owns the brand, it will con-

tinue to be a powerful name in the high street."

As well as personal computers, Amstrad also markets hi-fi equipment, televisions, cordless phones, faxes and answering machines. None of its later consumer electronics products have had the same impact, however, as the IBM clone of a PC that Amstrad pioneered in the 1980s.

Comment, page 25
Sugar sweet and sour, page 23
Sheringham row, page 32

Sir Ernest considers all options as he puts Racal up for sale

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Sir Ernest Harrison yesterday in effect raised a "for sale" sign over Racal Electronics, the defence to telecommunications business he has run for 31 years, in a final effort to please investors before his retirement.

Announcing the latest stage in Racal's restructuring, with the loss of 1,000 jobs world-wide, Sir Ernest made clear that "all options" were being considered in the quest for shareholder value, including sales or mergers of businesses or partnerships with larger companies. A third of the job losses would be in the UK.

Advisers including Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank, have been appointed to lead the hunt for partners. However Sir

Ernest made clear there were no fast solutions to difficulties at Racal, which has made two profit warnings this year.

"I hope it will be done quickly and certainly I would welcome a very early retirement. All options are open," said Sir Ernest who is 71. He added: "These things don't happen overnight as you know. They do take time."

He pledged to stay at the helm of Racal until the problems were sorted out: "I intend to remain chairman of this company and I am totally committed to achieving great value for shareholders. The key is to be bold when the occasion arises and make the right decision... and I may board have an outstanding record."

Yesterday's news did little to boost the share price, which edged up 1.5p to 235p, valuing the group at £670m. A year ago the shares were 313p. Sir Ernest has 717,000 share options exercisable at well above the current market price.

Sir Ernest would not be drawn on his own target for a break-up value. "If someone offered me 10 pounds a share I'd say, 'Can I have that in writing?' If they gave it to me in writing I'd take it," he said yesterday.

James Heal, an analyst with stockholders Hoare Govett, said: "He appears to have put the business up for sale. But it's quite clear there aren't going to be any deals for 12 months at least. The only question is how much the company is worth."

Comment, page 25

Lloyd's names to match capital put up by corporate members

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Lloyd's of London yesterday confirmed plans to force traditional names to put up the same amount of capital as the insurance market's new corporate members do to support their underwriting.

It bowed to pressure from individual members, however, to extend the time period over which it plans to level the playing field.

The plans are part of a package of measures designed to strengthen the financial security that underpins Lloyd's. The proposals have been criticised as being the latest move to encourage corporate capital to the market at the expense of traditional names, a charge Lloyd's denied yesterday.

Names are now to be given

three years rather than two to meet new requirements to show evidence of assets worth 50 per cent of the premium income they want to underwrite. The change was made after responses to a consultation document on the proposals published last month.

Currently names only have to lodge funds representing as little as 20 per cent of their underwriting limit at the market whereas corporate members have to put 50 per cent in trust. By 2000, names will have to hold 40 per cent of premium capacity at Lloyd's with a further 10 per cent backed by other personal wealth.

The time for names to increase their minimum level of means to £350,000 has also been extended by three years to five years and will now come into force in 2002. Allowances for reaching these levels are being made for names who have fallen below the minimum level of capital as a result of the disastrous losses at Lloyd's in the five years to 1992.

Lloyd's is pressing ahead with a proposal to prevent names from using their principal private residence as collateral for underwriting. It has decided, however, to allow names to continue using letters of credit backed by their homes if the arrangement was in place before the end of 1994.

The decision to strengthen the legal framework representing as little as 20 per cent of their underwriting limit at the market whereas corporate members have to put 50 per cent in trust. By 2000, names will have to hold 40 per cent of premium capacity at Lloyd's with a further 10 per cent backed by other personal wealth.

The time for names to increase their minimum level of means to £350,000 has also been extended by three years to five years and will now come into force in 2002. Allowances

for reaching these levels are being made for names who have fallen below the minimum level of capital as a result of the disastrous losses at Lloyd's in the five years to 1992.

Lloyd's is pressing ahead with a proposal to prevent names from using their principal private residence as collateral for underwriting. It has decided, however, to allow names to continue using letters of credit backed by their homes if the arrangement was in place before the end of 1994.

The decision to strengthen the legal framework representing as little as 20 per cent of their underwriting limit at the market whereas corporate members have to put 50 per cent in trust. By 2000, names will have to hold 40 per cent of premium capacity at Lloyd's with a further 10 per cent backed by other personal wealth.

The time for names to increase their minimum level of means to £350,000 has also been extended by three years to five years and will now come into force in 2002. Allowances

for reaching these levels are being made for names who have fallen below the minimum level of capital as a result of the disastrous losses at Lloyd's in the five years to 1992.

Lloyd's is pressing ahead with a proposal to prevent names from using their principal private residence as collateral for underwriting. It has decided, however, to allow names to continue using letters of credit backed by their homes if the arrangement was in place before the end of 1994.

The time for names to increase their minimum level of means to £350,000 has also been extended by three years to five years and will now come into force in 2002. Allowances

for reaching these levels are being made for names who have fallen below the minimum level of capital as a result of the disastrous losses at Lloyd's in the five years to 1992.

Lloyd's is pressing ahead with a proposal to prevent names from using their principal private residence as collateral for underwriting. It has decided, however, to allow names to continue using letters of credit backed by their homes if the arrangement was in place before the end of 1994.

The time for names to increase their minimum level of means to £350,000 has also been extended by three years to five years and will now come into force in 2002. Allowances



Grid puts off plans to find Energis partner

National Grid Group, the privatised power transmission business, has put off imminent plans to find an equity partner for its fast growing telecommunications business, Energis, after a better than expected operating performance, writes Chris Godsmark.

Energis' revenues rose more than doubled last year from £12.8m to £97.1m as its network expanded. Investment was £90m, with £300m expected over the next three years. It now serves 33,000 business sites in the UK and plans to build direct links to companies in London's Docklands.

The network also unveiled an operating agreement with Deutsche Telekom, though David Jones, National Grid chief executive, said there was no longer such a strong need for full-blown strategic alliances.

"Certainly we have had discussions with a number of potential partners. In the meantime, the business has moved on quite dramatically."

The Grid announced a 12 per cent rise in profits for the year to March to £591.4m and raised its dividend by 8.4 per cent to 11.13p. Cost savings this year would be in double figures.

STOCK MARKETS						
FTSE 100	4557.80	-5.00	-0.1	4693.90	4056.80	3.60
FTSE 250	4362.00	-19.90	-0.4	4729.40	4462.00	3.66
FTSE 350	2212.70	-3.90	-0.2	2372.10	2017.90	3.61
FTSE SmallCap	2281.01	-10.34	-0.5	2374.20	2178.20	3.09
FTSE All-Share	2174.41	-4.27	-0.2	2230.98	1988.78	3.57
New York	7333					

ay off



COMMENT

The problem was that the Amstrad PC was – and Mr Sugar is the first to admit this – a one off, a bit of fluke really, and as the competition caught up and overtook him, he could never find anything remotely comparable to replace it'

Digital television groups may have to merge

Cathy Newman

Zeneca's £46m bid for Netherlands biotech faces revolt

Sameena Ahmad

Zeneca, the UK drug giant, has locked horns with a small band of Dutch shareholders who are threatening to scupper its £46m agreed bid for Mogen, the Leiden-based plant biotechnology company.

The shareholders, who attended an emergency general meeting held by Mogen yesterday, have opposed the bid, accusing management of selling out to Zeneca at too low a price. Zeneca is offering 13.75 Dutch guilders (435p) a share which compares with Mogen's price of more than 50 guilders before the bid was announced in early April.

Eelkman Rooda, who runs the Rotterdam-based corporate finance company, Eelkman Rooda, Van Lawick & Co which is representing the shareholders said: "They are very angry and disappointed at Mogen's management. They gave us the impression that they did not discuss price with any of the other bidders in the pre-qualifying round."

Mr Rooda estimated that small shareholders representing more than one-third of Mogen would reject Zeneca's offer. Although Zeneca has secured commitments from six institutions representing 51 per cent of Mogen, the group has said the offer, which closes on 16 June, is conditional on it getting at least two-thirds of the shares tendered.

Under Dutch takeover law, achieving over two-thirds acceptance would mean Zeneca was obliged to buy Mogen. Stuart Shields, a manager for Zeneca Agrochemicals said: "If we don't get two-thirds we could continue, but there's not much point. Having a substantial minority shareholding would limit our freedom to act and change things."

Arie Breure, managing director at Mogen, denied that he had not discussed Mogen's price with other bidders, but indicated that in the initial round, which involved 19 companies, strategic fit was a more important consideration.

"Mogen has not got a major track record in profits and turnover. For technology companies it is essential that there is a strategic fit with the company that is bidding," Mr Breure said.

He added that five of the 19 companies expressed serious interest in Mogen and that three, including Zeneca went into a second round of the diligence. Though he would not say if price was discussed throughout the bidding process, Mr Breure said that Zeneca's was the highest offer. "I had hoped to get a higher bid out of this process, but Zeneca's was the best." Zeneca had originally bid 12.50 guilders before raising its offer.

Mogen shareholders are believed to have become disgruntled after the German group Agrevo bought the agricultural biotech PDS for around 110 times revenues. Mr Eelkman said that Zeneca's offer valued Mogen at around 10 times revenues. "This price does not reflect the real value of the company", he said.

CIA vulnerable to takeover as rival buys stake

Cathy Newman

CIA Group, the media buying network, looked increasingly vulnerable to a takeover bid yesterday after WPP Group, the world's largest advertising and marketing conglomerate, paid £10.2m for a 14.4 per cent stake in the company.

WPP bought Blugroup Holding, which is wholly owned by CIA Group's former vice-chairman, Marco Benatti. Mr Benatti said at the end of last year that he would sell his stake "for personal reasons".



Martin Sorrell: Firm believer in media consolidation

While the sale of Mr Benatti's 6 million shares was widely expected, and is believed to have followed disagreements on international strategy, the identity of the buyer took the industry by surprise. WPP's purchase was seen by some observers as a launch pad for a full bid, despite the company's claims that it was an investment.

It is understood WPP would be prevented from launching a bid within 12 months under the terms of the agreement with Blugroup. WPP would pay Blugroup an additional £3.5m if, within that period, a bidder paid

UKAV to buy 65% share in Mansfield

Tom Stevenson

Julian Treger and Brian Myerson, the scourge of underperforming management through their UK Active Value fund, are to stop telling others how to run their business and do it themselves.

After a sequence of high-profile rebel shareholder campaigns at Scholl, Greycoat and Signet, the South African entrepreneurs have bought into a stock market shell to use as an acquisition vehicle.

UK Active Value yesterday announced a £5m subscription to new shares in John Mansfield, a quoted timber business with a market value of just £3m. Following the share purchase UKAV will hold 65.4 per cent of Mansfield's shares.

The deal is expected to be followed within months by sizeable acquisitions of undervalued companies. Targets are already in place with the first purchase thought likely to cost around £250m. Acquisitions will be funded with a mixture of cash and shares.

The subscription for the shares is to take place at 3p a share, a small discount to the prevailing price at the time negotiations started between the company and UKAV. Yesterday's announcement, and the appointment of Mr Myerson and Mr Treger as joint chairman, sent the shares up from 5.5p to 8p.

The acquisition of John Mansfield marks a departure from UKAV's confrontational style which has been criticised as no more than corporate raiding.

Since 1993 it has picked on underperforming stocks, built up a stake, put the squeeze on management and forced through a sale or break up to release value. Now it must prove it can practise what it has preached.

A death that will not be mourned in the City

So farewell then Amstrad, the company that brought PCs to the masses. The City, for one, won't regret your passing, and nor will Alan Sugar, your creator, who has been just dying to throw his company to the wolves, as much out of pique as anything else, ever since the City turned down his plans to take it private.

The story of Amstrad's rise and fall has been much told, analysed and commented upon, and it is perhaps unnecessary to go over it all again now. All the same, a little piece of history passes into the mists of time with the final demise of this one time wonder stock. So it is worth recalling what Amstrad once stood for and why, like so much of the 1980s, it was never going to last.

Alan Sugar came very much from the raw boy school of entrepreneurship, and while there's nothing wrong with that, his instinct was always going to be that of the street trader he originally was. But to claim, as some do, that he epitomised the fast buck, short termist culture of the rolling 1980s, is too harsh a judgement. His brilliance was in making first the word processor, and then the PC, accessible to the mass market. Many followed in his wake, and the market eventually fragmented and matured beyond his reach. But he was the first, and his achievement in galvanising and energising an industry in this way, is a very considerable one. He was one of the catalysts for the PC revolution.

The problem was that the Amstrad PC was

also – and Mr Sugar is the first to admit this – a one off, a bit of fluke really, and as the competition caught up and overtook him, he could never find anything remotely comparable to replace it. In the circumstances, Amstrad's decline was probably managed as well as it could have been, and though Mr Sugar was severely criticised for attempting to take his company private at what was widely believed to be an undervaluation, it is worth noting that Amstrad shareholders would have done rather better by accepting his offer and reinvesting the proceeds in the stock market than by staying the course.

When a man doesn't want to work for you, and Amstrad was going nowhere before Mr Sugar's bid, that's been doubly the case since then. So yesterday's breakup proposals are probably the best course left open to Amstrad's shareholders. And if any of them still have a stomach for Mr Sugar's, shall we say, somewhat cavalier approach to the investment community, they can always try their luck with Tottenham Hotspur, where Mr Sugar is perilously close to mismanaging his star player, Teddy Sheringham, out of the side.

Sir Ernest's huge task to develop value

From one old pro, to an even older one. Sir Ernest Harrison is famous for pulling rabbits out of his accountant's hat, but at 71 his

final challenge – to revive Racal's flagging share price – may well prove beyond him. No amount of banging the shareholder value drum yesterday, which has long been Sir Ernest's favourite instrument, could conceal the scale of the task.

Let's be blunt here. All the best bits of Racal have already gone. His biggest coup, for which shareholders will be eternally grateful, was to live off Vodafone. Five years later the mobile phone business is worth £8.4bn, almost 13 times the value of its former parent. Then came Club Security, bought earlier this year by Williams Holdings for £1.5bn. Six years ago Williams bid less than £800m for the whole of Racal.

What is left may not be the ragbag of assets some commentators claim, but it nevertheless remains a collection of medium-sized fish in a very deep corporate pond. Sir Ernest freely admits that. All the main subsidiaries – defence, telecommunications and data products – would surely sit better in the lap of giants like GEC, British Aerospace or AT&T. Racal's already stretched balance sheet cannot provide the kind of investment needed to catapult growth into the fast lane.

Which leaves Sir Ernest with a bit of a dilemma. To produce another Vodafone would take time, money, and more luck than anyone deserves in a lifetime. Unfortunately, he's running out of all three. The next best alternative for investors would probably be a series of substantial asset sales. Yet here

again Sir Ernest has lost the element of surprise, precisely the weapon which stood him in such good stead in the early 1990s.

He may not be sticking an "everything must go" poster in the shop window, but the effect is much the same. All the likely buyers know he's a seller in the right circumstances and they'll be pricing accordingly. Even so, a Racal break-up, with the money returned to shareholders, may be Sir Ernest's best way of realising the value he's so keen to develop.

Place your bets on digital TV runners

Every day, seemingly, brings a fresh piece of speculation on the soon-to-be-awarded licences for digital terrestrial television.

The latest wrinkle comes from Kleinwort Benson, which argues convincingly that the two rival consortia would probably have to merge in the event that the Independent Television Commission decides to split the three licences between them. The split licence approach has become very much the fashionable theory in the industry and the City, since it would allow the ITC to duck the politically charged decision of choosing between the two and allow it to give something to both.

The trouble is, as KB points out, that both consortia are saying they couldn't afford to subsidise the costs of the set top box unless

given all three licences. And without the box, there will be no digital terrestrial. Ergo, the two consortia would have to merge, which in turn would mean that Sky, the largest and most aggressive of all the companies involved in the bidding, would end up running the show. In other words, splitting the licence would be self-defeating, and if the ITC wants to minimise Sky's influence on the new platform, it is going to have to award all three licences to the rival consortium, NTL and Lord Hollic.

Whether any of this speculation has much bearing on the ITC's deliberations is anyone's guess. In theory, the ITC is an entirely independent body, evaluating the rival proposals in judicial manner according to a prescribed set of criteria and standards. The ITC is meant to be entirely immune to the cut and thrust of public lobbying and debate. In practice, however, it cannot help but be influenced by the general noise around it and it may be worse than that.

Not that Labour's policy on media matters gives much of a clue to the outcome, for so far, there doesn't seem to be much of a policy. Ranting against the bonuses of Camelot bosses is about the most coherent thing we've so far had out of Chris Smith, our new Heritage Secretary, which isn't saying a lot. So place your bets. A month ago, we would certainly have said Sky and BDB. But the odds are changing by the day, and the rivals, Lord Hollic and NTL, are now the bookies' favourite.

ROLEX
of Geneva

Senior PIA official resigns

One of its most senior officials responsible for pension compensation and compliance at the Personal Investment Authority, the frontline financial regulator, has resigned, it emerged yesterday, writes Nic Cawthorn.

David Cranston, formerly head of member relations at the regulator, left abruptly on Friday. A PIA spokeswoman claimed yesterday that he left to pursue other business inter-

ests", but was unable to say what they were.

She was not prepared to say whether Mr Cranston had served out part of his notice period, but added: "He leaves with our thanks and good wishes." He is being replaced by Roger Bright, who moves over

from the regulator's finance and operations division.

Mr Cranston's job at the PIA involved making sure that the regulator's staff dealt with tens of thousands of cases inherited from former members that had gone bust. Earlier this week, it was revealed that just one person whose case was be-

ing dealt with by the PIA had been compensated.

Sources inside the PIA said Mr Cranston, who joined the regulator about two years ago, was being blamed for its failure to resolve the compensation problem. His relative inexperience within the financial industry, it was suggested, meant that Mr Cranston relied heavily on his executive assistant, Carmel Kelly, for advice.

There are only so many official Rolex jewellers.

How come so many of them are ours?



Rolex are as uncompromising in their selection of Official Rolex Jewellers as they are in the manufacture of the timepieces themselves.

With our huge nationwide chain including Walker & Hall, the Goldsmiths Group is probably the country's leading chain of quality jewellers.

It all began in 1919, when Goldsmiths were appointed as Britain's first Rolex jewellers.

Today, every Goldsmiths jeweller still jealousy

guards his reputation for outstanding quality and service. Rolex is available at the branches listed above. Only so many jewellers will ever earn the right to sell a Rolex.

And only so many people will ever own one.

You perhaps?



G.O.L.D.S.M.I.T.H.S

W.A.L.K.E.R & H.A.L.L

The first officially appointed Rolex stockists in the UK.

Illustrated: Rolex Oyster Perpetual Datejust Chronometer in stainless steel £1,810. Rolex Oyster prices start at £1,500 (RRP) VAT. For more information about your local jeweller, please call 0800 GOLDSMITHS.

is off plan
ergis part

While the sale of Mr Benatti's 6 million shares was widely expected, and is believed to have followed disagreements on international strategy, the identity of the buyer took the industry by surprise. WPP's purchase was seen by some observers as a launch pad for a full bid, despite the company's claims that it was an investment.

It is understood WPP would be prevented from launching a bid within 12 months under the terms of the agreement with Blugroup. WPP would pay Blugroup an additional £3.5m if, within that period, a bidder paid

business

Vodafone profits hit by aftermath of price war

Chris Godmark
Business Correspondent

Intense competition in the UK mobile phone market will continue to eat into profit margins according to Vodafone, the largest of the four British networks, which last year continued to feel the aftermath of a damaging price war.

The downbeat assessment came alongside encouraging news from Vodafone's expanding overseas markets, which revealed their first set of annual profits yesterday.

Chris Gent, Vodafone chief executive, said earnings this year would continue to be hit by the cost of moving customers from the older analogue networks to digital.

Revealing a drop in profit margins from almost 40 per cent to 35 per cent, Mr Gent said these one-off costs should fall as the analogue network declined. But he added: "The outlook for margins in the UK is probably modest decline. We are in an increasingly competitive scene."

Last week One 2 One, the smallest of the four networks, launched new price packages which it said were cheaper than the competition. Vodafone and Cellnet were both hit by attracting low-spending customers with cut-price deals in Christmas 1995. Many decided to hand back their phones a year later.

The after-effects were reflected in a drop in Vodafone's average customer revenue from £481 to £427 and an increase in churn, which measures how quickly people leave the network. The UK subscriber base



Expensive competition: Chris Gent said Vodafone spent £52m on customer incentives

grew more slowly, by 415,000 customers last year compared with 633,000 customers the year before.

Vodafone yesterday reported a 25 per cent rise in its turnover for last year to £1.75bn, though pre-tax profits increased more slowly by 13 per cent to £539m.

Profits from the UK operations rose by 5 per cent to

£519.1m, while overseas profits were £10.5m compared with losses of £27m in 1995. Total subscribers, including the share of overseas operations, rose by 32 per cent to just over 4 million. The shares were unchanged at 271.5p.

Mr Gent said it was "very likely" that Vodafone would take up an option to increase its

stake in the French mobile network, SFR, from 16.1 per cent to 20 per cent.

The investment brought the UK group into an unlikely link last year with British Telecom, which bought an indirect stake in SFR and also owns 20 per cent of Cellnet. "We are good competitors and good allies," said Mr Gent.

Evans joins new biotechnology company

Sameena Ahmad

Just months after pledging that he was "at saturation point" and would not launch another new venture for at least five years, Chris Evans, the hiotech entrepreneur, has taken a non-executive post in Microscience, a biotechnology company which hopes to list on the UK market in three years.

The company was launched

yesterday by Merlin Ventures, the seed capital company founded last year by Dr Evans, and by the Royal Postgraduate Medical School. Microscience's technology base is aimed at bringing new antimicrobial vaccines and drugs to market.

The drugs and vaccines will include the prevention of infectious diseases that have become resistant to antibiotics and Group B Streptococcus.

Merlin also yesterday completed a £2.5m first round private funding for its other company, Cyclacel, which is developing a cancer drug. Cyclacel is chaired by Dr Evans and could float on the stock market in two years.

Liz Holt, a director of Merlin, denied that Dr Evans had taken on too many roles. Dr Evans, who recently stood down as a non-executive chairman of

Chirosceince, is also the founder of three quoted groups – Toad, the car security company, Celsis, the biotechnology group, and Enviro, the environmental products and services company.

Ms Holt said: "Chris now has a team of seven of us sharing the work that he was taking on alone. That's why Merlin was founded. I don't think anyone will ever stop Chris founding

companies. The saturation point comment was taken out of context. There are seven of us here striving to get to saturation point."

Ms Holt said Merlin aimed to get initial private funding for its companies within four to six months. After that Merlin would hope for just one more injection of venture capital before a public listing three to five years after launch.

From Ambassador to insurance missionary

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



Keen eye: David Kerr's L&G remit is to scrutinise the Government's developing policy on private healthcare

Legal & General has appointed David Kerr from Ambassador Insurance, a subsidiary of Lloyds TSB, to develop its private medical insurance business. PMI itself has been a casualty of the recession and rising costs of private hospital care. L&G went into the business of providing insurance to cover medical bills only 18 months ago, marketing it first to its existing personal customers. Mr Kerr's job will be to convince small and medium-sized companies that this is a cost-effective service to provide or subsidise, that will pay dividends in improved health and employee loyalty. He also has to keep a close eye on the way the new Government's views on private healthcare develop.

This is an unknown territory and L&G, like its rivals, is anxious to be constructive and co-operative and make a positive contribution to future policy without getting itself on the wrong side of Government on the subject.

Married with four children, the oldest of whom is a medical student, Mr Kerr is a compulsive acquirer of qualification. He is an ACIB from his early days in the private banking division of Lloyds Bank. He also has degrees in law and marketing, and is currently doing an MBA at Henley. His parents both started working in the healthcare industry even before the NHS. Aged 44, he still skis and runs, and completed the London Marathon in 1995 in a time of around 4 hours. Next time he hopes to have the confidence as well as the contacts to attract some more expensive sponsorship.

Grant Baird, the chain-smoking former Bank of England and Royal Bank of Scotland economist who now runs the Scottish Financial Enterprise, tells me the main concern of Scottish business – now the devolution bandwagon is rolling – is that, just as the UK runs the risk of seeming semi-detached from Europe, so Scotland may be seen as semi-detached from England. This is at a time when foreign businesses are debating where to place their next investment project. Scottish companies also worry that tax-raising powers could disadvantage them and make it harder or more expensive to attract and hold their skilled workers.

The Referendum Bill comes at a time when Scottish companies are sharing the strength

of the UK economy without suffering from attendant problems of inflation and soaring house prices. Excluding investors, there are now 87 quoted companies run from Scotland, with 15 new listings in the past two years, plus another 19 traded on AIM. The Scotsman's index of Scottish share prices, irreverently known as the McFootie, shows strong share price performances this year. Scottish banks and insurance companies are making the running in the buoyant financial sector.

I have to report, however, a dispute over the impact of the new Scottish life assurance industry. Edinburgh-based Mr Baird takes the view that the takeover of Scottish Amicable by the Pru was largely beneficial. Alf Young, the legendary and long-time economics editor of the Glasgow-based Herald, called Mr Baird "Dr Pangloss". Mr Baird replied by comparing Young and his doom-laden warnings to Dad's Army's Private Frazer.

Clifford German

The eight-man crew of the yacht *Mediator* that won the annual Hoyte Round the Island race round the Isle of Wight last Sunday are all brokers for Sedgwick International Broking Services. For good measure they picked up three class victories and the Royal Thames Yacht Club Challenge Cup for their performance. A spokesman praised the will to win so common in the yachting fraternity.

It helps, of course, that the Sedgwick Group owns the yacht which doubles as a competition yacht and a vessel for corporate advertising and hospitality. It also helps to have two sailors, skipper and helmsman Ben Nicholls and tactician Fred Blenke, who have represented Britain at the national and Olympic level. Another crewman, Chris Clarke, is an England Rugby player. The crew is now in training to meet other City crews in the Sedgwick Challenge.

House prices close to all-time high

House prices rose by 1 per cent last month and are now within 3 per cent of their high point reached in 1989, according to Halifax yesterday. The former building society said the rise in May meant house prices were 6.6 per cent higher than 12 months ago. Prices paid by first-time buyers rose 1.7 per cent and are 7.3 per cent above levels a year ago.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

MEPC waits for efforts to pay off

MEPC, the property group, has been a lacklustre performer over the past few years, with net assets per share barely moving since 1992. But management, led by veteran chief executive James Tuckey, has been shaking things up of late, spurred on by the bid approach from rivals Hammerson in March.

In the past three-and-a-half years some £1.8bn of purchases, sales and developments have taken place, leaving around 70 per cent of the portfolio focused on the UK, with another 20 per cent in the US. Mr Tuckey has also attempted to address criticisms that the group has too many small and poorly located properties, cutting the number of sites by 25 per cent. MEPC has been left with an estate equally balanced between office and retail properties, with just over 10 per cent in industrial units.

The fruits of these efforts have yet to come through in the figures. Yesterday's interim results showed pre-tax profits all but wiped out in the six months to March, slumping from £67m to £2.5m. But that represents the pain before the gain. The damage was caused by the decision by the finance director, James Dondas, to unwind series of expensive interest rate swaps at a one-off cost of £73.2m. The gain will come in the form of an expected £60m of reduced interest costs up to the end of the century.

Mr Tuckey's radicalism does not end there. The group is outsourcing the management of much of its UK estate to allow management to focus on making money. Last September's decision to divide central management of the group's portfolio by type of property rather than by geography has the same aim in mind. The segmentation will allow the easy sale or separate flotation of any underperforming parts of the business.

But the real excitement should come from the £470m purchase and development programme over the next few years, spearheaded by Robert Ware, who has just been appointed corporate development director. The new has towards leisure and retailing, which saw the £80m acquisition of three factory outlet cen-

tres from C&J Clark in April, should put the group in good stead for the future.

Further corporate activity is on the cards. Mr Tuckey's reasons for rejecting Hammerson sound convincing: its £800m development programme represents a big gamble on the recovery in the property market continuing.

While it does, MEPC looks

a reasonable bet, especially given net asset value forecasts for the current year moving up to north of 99p a share against a share price of 51.5p, down 0.5p. However, investors may have to be patient, given the weight of negative sentiment surrounding the group.

De La Rue loses its sex appeal

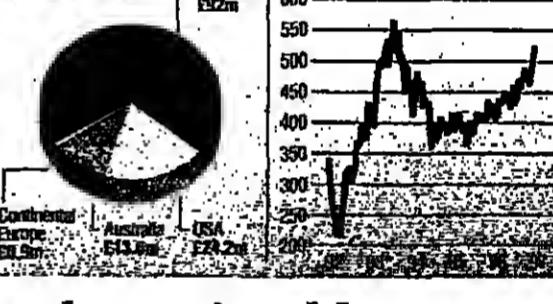
Two years ago, De La Rue looked like a sexy, go-go business. Then its shares stood at over £10 and it enjoyed a heady rating of almost 20 times earnings. Now, after three profit warnings and yesterday's disappointing results, it has become abundantly clear that the group's core business of banknote printing is mature, over supplied and cyclical.

The shares look fairly valued on 12 times forward earnings, but add in the scope for more disappointment, like the Camelot associate losing its lottery franchise, and there is no reason to buy the shares.

MEPC: At a glance

Market value: £1.6bn, share price 51.5p

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Five-year record				
Full year				
Gross Reefs (£m)	477	373	391	351
Pre-tax profits (£m)	111	123	140	67.0
Net assets per share (p)	122	127	130	51.5
Dividends per share (p)	2.0	2.0	2.0	5.25
"not reviewed"				
Net income				
United Kingdom £122m				
Share price				
Half year to March 97				
Australia £113.8m	329.20	329.20	329.20	329.20
USA £129.2m	329.20	329.20	329.20	329.20



Norwich dangles a sizeable carrot

Only a broken TV set or an extended holiday recently would have prevented Norwich Union members from being aware of the fact that they have until next Tuesday, 10 June, to apply for further shares in the mutual insurance group's £2.4bn cash raising. Just to make sure, the group is pitching the shares being sold to its existing members, who are already receiving free handouts worth at least £1,500, at a 25% discount to the price other shareholders, including the big institutions, will have to pay. With a strike price estimated at between 240p and 290p, that means members are being offered a discount of around 10 per cent, a sizeable carrot.

It is certainly an attractive deal, although because Norwich is choosing to raise fresh capital at the same time as its conversion to a publicly quoted company, institutions will not be quite so desperate as with Halifax and Alliance & Leicester to buy a meaningful share of the stock. That means the silly

ings applied to the building societies are unlikely to be repeated.

That said, Norwich Union is a well-regarded company, operating in a market that is bound to grow fast thanks to the steady unravelling of the welfare state. Its management has an improving reputation and there is still plenty of scope to cut costs. Most of the benefit of that process will now accrue to shareholders. Sales and profits from the UK life business are improving substantially, while the smaller general insurance arm has refocused on personal and small commercial lines and away from long tail policies and large risks.

There is a strong healthcare business.

The dividend is well covered by life profits, so a gross yield at the flotation price of near 5 per cent is both safe and attractive against the rest of the market. With a current "grey market" price of 305p, members should take up more shares, while the equity also looks reasonable value for outside investors.

Dairy Crest 'on track for 10% earnings growth'

Magnus Grimond

Dairy Crest, the marketing and processing arm of the old Milk Marketing Board, said yesterday it was on track to reach its target of 10 per cent earnings growth this year, despite difficult markets for liquid milk. The optimism sent the shares up 5.5p higher to 220p yesterday, close to their all-time high and well up on the 155p at which the Yoplait to Clover spreads business was floated last year.

Unveiling the group's first set of full year results since the stock market launch, the chief executive, John Houlston, said that "without making a forecast we are confident that we are on track to hit our 10 per cent target". Profits would be increasingly weighted to the second half of the year, given the seasonality of many of the group's brands like Davidstow mature cheddar, which do well in the run-up to Christmas, he said.

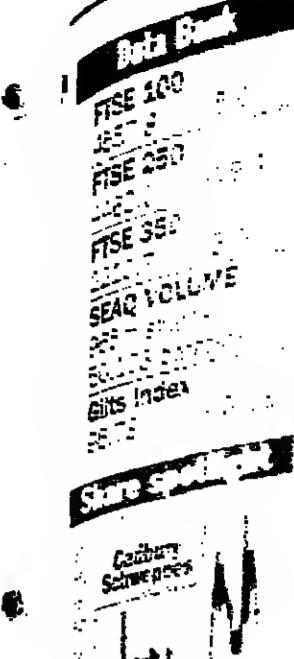
The latter part of the year should also be boosted by the launch of the new "Football Milk" – a semi-skimmed variety, fortified with vitamins and featuring the colours of teams such

as Arsenal, Liverpool and Manchester United. The new cartons go on sale in a few weeks' time, for the start of the new football season, and follow a similar range covering the rugby Super League launched in March.

Ignoring the effects of the capital restructuring prior to the listing, profits rose 13 per cent to £35.5m in the 12 months to March, a rise which would have been 16 per cent if the float costs of £900,000 are stripped out. A final dividend of 6.64p makes 9.9p for the year, for a not



John Houlston: Fears margin squeeze from strong sterling



Ryan strikes lucky with Dip

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Those who gambled on Grapeshot getting the Derby distance were disappointed yesterday when the colt even failed to stay until the weekend. Just 24 hours after being declared a runner in the Classic, Luca Cumani's representative sustained a minor injury. "Grapeshot has suffered a slight setback and is now an un-newmarketed runner in the Derby," the Newmarket trainer revealed.

The probable absence of Goodwood's Predominant Stakes winner, who had been as low as 16-1, leaves Jason Weaver searching for a ride and punters investigating elsewhere for the each-way value. The initial targets with Ladbrokes yes-

terday were Fahrus (12-1 from 14-1) and Cloudings (10-1 from 12-1).

The latter, who would be the first French winner since Emile Piggott's seventh in 1976, has done nothing to advertise his prospects recently apart from breathing regularly and licking his mane clean. The son of Sadler's Wells was still 25-1 on Sunday morning but then his stablemate at André Fabre's yard, Peintre Célébre, ran away with the Prix du Jockey Club (French Derby). In third place in the Classic, beaten over a and a half lengths, was Asturahab, who had been further behind Cloudings on his previous start in the Prix Lupin.

Cloudings will be ridden by Olivier Pessier, who was aboard John Gosden's Benny The Dip when he won the Dante Stakes

at York. As Frankie Dettori, the other jockey to partner Benny The Dip this season, is also committed elsewhere – to Godolphin's Bold Demand – Gosden has recently been on a jockey hunt. That quest ended yesterday at the door of Willie Ryan.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Ziggy's Dancer
(Chester 9.10)
NB: General Haven
(Warwick 3.45)

"We discussed all the options regarding jockeys with the owner, Landon Knight, last night and Willie was his choice," the Nemarket trainer said. "It's not an easy race in which to bring over an American and expect him to fly round because knowledge of Epsom is everything."

Ryan has finished fourth in a Derby (on Fleur du Dancer in 1986), but last time he rode in the race he almost finished in fourth after being unseated from Foyer three years ago.

The bulletin from the Manor sickhouse yesterday was that both Romanov and Single Empire worked pleasantly and showed no sign of the malady that has taken some of their stablemates. "They worked well and they will both run," Peter Chapple-Hyam, their trainer, reported. "I will leave it up to

John Reid as to which he rides but I imagine he'll go for Romanov."

The Irishman was third on Romanov in the Irish 2,000 Guineas two Sundays ago, while David Harrison rode Single Empire when the partnership captured the Italian Derby on the same afternoon. "They are both outsiders," Chapple-Hyam conceded. "Romanov is stepping up in trip but I think he will get it. Single Empire is a good price considering Bold Demand, whom he beat conceding weight at Newmarket, is only 20-1. And he is a proven stayer."

Also double-handed is Barry Hills, who, given his record in the Blue Riband, could saddle all but one of the field and still have to be satisfied with the runner-up slot. The Lambourn trainer saddles Musalsal and

Pessier: Derby odds are cut

The Fly, and his son Michael is expected to take the ride on the former. That could leave The Fly post open to a man who has already ridden a Derby winner, Kahlasi's partner in 1988, Ray Cochrane.

With the exception of 7-year-old Jimmy 100 (D Grange) and 5-year-old Silver Command, 25-1, the 10-1 Cheltenham (Chester 9.10) and 20-1 Dante (Warwick 3.45) are the best odds on offer.

WEDNESDAY

HYPERTON
8.10 Scenarios
8.10 Farewell My Love
9.10 Ziggy's Dancer

GOING: Good to Firm.
STALLS: In 21-22 outside; remainder - inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low numbers best 15-17.
LEH-HAND, RIGHT, CIRCULAR COURSE. Not suitable for long-striding horses.
COURSE: In near centre of dry on A548. Chester General station 1m. ADMINISTRATION: Course open 7am-7pm. Admissions £3; Dev Stand £4, Course £2. CAR PARK: 51.
LEADING TRAINERS: 1. GOSDEN: 17 winners from 113 runners (a success rate of 15.5%). and a level of 15.5%; 2. BARRY – 17 winners from 113 runners (141 runs); 3. HALLIWELL – 16 winners, 48 runs, 12.5%; 4. BARRY – 13 +11.0%; 5. P. COLE – 8 winners, 48 runs, 12.5%; 6. H. ALLEN – 14 winners, 78 runs, 17.5%; 7. D. HARRISON – 11 winners, 21.1%; 8. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 9. E. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 10. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 11. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 12. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 13. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 14. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 15. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 16. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 17. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 18. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 19. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 20. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 21. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 22. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 23. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 24. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 25. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 26. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 27. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 28. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 29. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 30. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 31. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 32. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 33. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 34. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 35. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 36. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 37. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 38. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 39. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 40. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 41. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 42. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 43. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 44. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 45. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 46. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 47. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 48. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 49. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 50. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 51. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 52. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 53. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 54. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 55. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 56. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 57. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 58. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 59. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 60. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 61. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 62. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 63. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 64. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 65. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 66. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 67. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 68. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 69. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 70. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 71. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 72. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 73. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 74. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 75. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 76. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 77. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 78. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 79. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 80. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 81. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 82. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 83. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 84. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 85. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 86. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 87. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 88. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 89. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 90. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 91. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 92. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 93. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 94. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 95. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 96. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 97. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 98. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 99. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 100. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 101. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 102. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 103. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 104. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 105. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 106. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 107. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 108. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 109. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 110. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 111. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 112. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 113. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 114. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 115. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 116. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 117. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 118. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 119. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 120. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 121. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 122. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 123. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 124. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 125. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 126. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 127. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 128. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 129. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 130. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 131. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 132. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 133. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 134. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 135. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 136. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 137. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 138. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 139. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 140. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 141. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 142. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 143. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 144. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 145. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 146. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 147. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 148. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 149. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 150. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 151. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 152. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 153. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 154. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 155. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 156. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 157. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 158. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 159. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 160. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 161. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 162. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 163. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 164. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 165. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 166. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 167. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 168. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 169. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 170. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 171. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 172. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 173. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 174. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 175. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 176. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 177. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 178. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 179. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 180. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 181. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 182. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 183. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 184. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 185. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 186. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 187. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 188. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 189. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 190. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 191. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 192. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 193. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 194. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 195. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 196. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 197. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 198. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 199. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 200. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 201. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 202. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 203. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 204. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 205. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 206. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 207. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 208. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 209. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 210. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 211. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 212. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 213. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 214. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 215. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 216. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 217. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 218. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 219. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 220. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 221. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 222. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 22.5%; 223. D. HARRISON – 16 winners, 72 runs, 2

sport

THE ASHES 97: Australian vice-captain warns that one-day international whitewash served only to restore his team's killer instinct

Ambivalence of the captain in waiting

Breakfast with Steve Waugh. With the first Test at Edgbaston almost upon us, and with the Australians approaching the series in the sort of disarray we normally associate with England, the chances of him being in a good mood are about as much as seeing him smile at the English fielders during the course of this summer.

Worse still, having realised he was not in the hotel reception, I telephone up to his room, to be greeted by a groggy voice. "Give me half an hour," he said. And so I did. On his arrival I told him, in a caring sort of way, that he looked tired. "Not really," he replied. "It's how I always look." So far Steve Waugh is living up to his uncompromising image.

Maybe it's just the shock of being totally outplayed in the one-day internationals and the near hysteria as a consequence in both the British and Australian press. At first Waugh, the Aussies' vice-captain, underlines the importance of the result. "We were playing for our country and none of us like losing at any type of cricket," he said, digging his fork into his sausage with some intent.

"There are a lot of people disappointed, especially back home in Australia. They've grown used to us winning just about everything, and they can't understand how we can lose a one-day series 3-0. I'm sure England would have had a few doubts after what happened in New Zealand and, in particular, in Zimbabwe, but the one-day series will have given them a great deal of confidence. We expected to win there; there's no doubt about that."

I mentioned that one or two former Australian Test cricketers had suggested that complacency had crept into the side. "That's garbage," Waugh replied. "There's no easy game any more, especially away from home. Even in the last two tours against England, where the results say that we won fairly easily, we always knew that they possessed talented players. We just didn't play well, and England were the better team."

The funny thing is that when he talks it soon becomes clear that he is bothered only because he dislikes losing, and not because he has any fears about Australia's eventual success this summer. While we English seem to be whooping with delight at the unexpected turn-around of fortunes, the Australians, epitomised by Steve Waugh, seem to be hiding

their time, and making mental notes which they intend to answer back in clinical fashion.

"Believe me, the last thing

we're doing is panicking,"

he said, warming to the theme.

"We've had

a bit of

Steve Waugh does not want to succeed Mark Taylor this summer. He tells Ian Stafford why

work to do, sure, but we didn't want to peak too soon in the season. I know that I'm beginning to hit the ball well, and Glenn McGrath was telling me last night that he was just beginning to find his rhythm."

And Shane Warne? Despite his seven-wicket haul in the Derbyshire match, he did not exactly look like the most feared bowler in the world during the Texaco series, did he? Waugh smiled. "Let's hope everyone's thinking that when the first Test starts. It wouldn't be a smart move. It will be nice to see him rip a ball through dressing his first over, and then see the faces in the England dressing-room."

So, in other words, the Australians can live with losing the Texaco because they have every intention of taking the Test series? "Well, we'd rather be in England's position, because they have a trophy and money in the bank, but we'll do something about it. They played well, and their younger players don't have too many scars or carry any excess baggage. But I think they'll discover Test match cricket to be a different ball game. We'll be testing them out to see what kind of characters they've got."

"We're the best team in the world, after all, and we've won many a series after losing the one-day games. I fully expect us to go out there and win. In fact, we've already talked as a team about the one-day defeats serving as a favour to us. The killer instinct and aggressiveness just wasn't there, but as a result, it definitely will be for the first Test. We'll be fired up and we'll play a lot harder."

Definitely no pleasantries on the pitch, then? "No way," he replied immediately. "Look, after we lost the third international at Lord's we all went into the England dressing room, congratulated them, and had a beer. That's fine. That's how the spirit should be. But when we're playing in the Test series we won't be going out there to be friendly. We're going out there to win. It was like that when Allan Border was in charge, and you won't see any difference this time. I wouldn't enjoy it any other way."

If there is one place Waugh does enjoy his cricket, then it is in England. Now on his third tour here, the New South Wales batsman-cum-bowler plundered the hapless English bowlers throughout the 1989 and 1993 tours. "That 1989 tour was the turning-point in my career," he admitted. "I hadn't scored a century in my first 26 Tests, and I knew my place was in jeopardy." Since then he has scored 12 Test centuries, and has a Test average of over 50 which has, to date, spanned 89 Tests and an incredible 221 one-day internationals.

Yet he has never actually captained Australia in a Test match. Well, not up to now. The smart money is still on Waugh taking over from Mark Taylor some time this summer, unless the present captain can somehow rid himself of the wretched form that has dogged him for the past year. This, one assumes, causes a slight moral dilemma for Waugh. On the one hand, it can't be good for the team if their captain bows out due to an inability to score any runs. On the other hand, it would open the door for the man who was 32 years old on Monday.

Waugh, incidentally, is growing friendlier by the minute. He takes this thorny subject like a friendly long hop.

"If I never captain the Australian Test side I'll never lose any sleep over it," he said. "It is his reply. "I always dreamed of playing for Australia, but I was never bothered about becoming captain."

"If it happens then, great, it would be a tremendous honour. Life would go on if we lost

Mark, or me for that matter. After all, we've carried on winning after Border, haven't we? But the truth is that I want to see Mark Taylor captain the side for all six Test matches. Do you wanna know why?"

I nod my head. "Well, it's not because I see him as my captain, but as my colleague and friend. I've known him a long time, and I don't like to see anyone struggle. We've all been there, and we all know how hard it is. You've got to remember, though, that Mark's scored 14 Test centuries, and that's no mean feat."

So, a compassionate side of Steve Waugh rears its head over breakfast. It turns out there's a lot more where this comes from. This is his first tour as a father. Back home outside Sydney, he has a 10-month-old baby daughter. I swear he looks all wistful as he talks about this.

"It's hard for me on tour because I miss her a lot," he owned up. "I've got to come to terms with being away from her. I tend to shut it out for a couple of days, and then go and look at my photo albums for an hour or two." Albums? "Yeah, well, I've brought around 150 photos of her. Then I'll call home, talk to the baby, and try to get it out of the way in one, big hit. After that I can focus on my cricket again for a few more days."

His other passion is the writing of yet another of his tour diaries, which will be published later in the year. "Tell him he's a useless batsman and you might get a black look but suggest, as one writer recently did, that he employs someone else to write his beloved diaries, and Waugh explodes.

"You can do me a favour, mate," he says. "I'm meaning to catch up with the person who wrote that for a little chat. The truth is that every word is written by me, and I take great pride in doing them. I write every single night on tour, and I take my own photographs."

So it's important to you, then? "Yeah, of course. I'm a lot different off the field than I am on. People think I never smile or enjoy life, but it's my job, and if I don't knuckle down and do it to the best of my ability, it won't be my job for long. But the books have been good for me, because it's helped to change one or two perceptions about me and the team."

What, then, did he write about on the night after the Australians' third successive one-day defeat? "Irefe... to the game, its turning points, my own performance, and the Lord's lunch." The Lord's lunch? "Yeah, well it was an absolute feast. I can understand why Mike Gatting's played for Middlesex for so long."

"Anyway, there must have been 400 plates of fantastic food spread out for us to eat. Do you wanna know what Shane Warne had?" Go on. "He got himself a roll with some huffer, and filled it with HP sauce. There was all that food to choose from, and he had an HP sauce roll."

Now Waugh is laughing, hardly acting like a man bothered by recent results against England. The first Test, of course, starts at Edgbaston tomorrow. As the only member of the Australian side ever to lose an Ashes series, when Gatting's men took the honours down under in 1986, Waugh not only sees this first encounter as crucial, he sees the first morning as all-important...

"If you can dominate the first session, the chances are that you will dominate the first day. If you can do that, then you're well on your way to winning the first Test. That would place you in a great position for the series, wouldn't it?"

It certainly would. Waugh made a swift 92 a few days ago at Gloucester, and seems to be finding his groove, which is good news for him and the Aussies, and bad news for us. Oh, and there is one other omen.

He has insisted on keeping one half of a red rag with him at the crease ever since he scored an unbeaten 157 against you've guessed it, the English at Headingly four years ago. Has he still got it?

"For sure mate," he answered, grinning. "But I didn't use it for the one-day internationals. I only used it for Test matches." He nodded his head with conviction. "I'll have it with me at Edgbaston."

Old pals passing the very best time of day Rouse-hunting season begins

Test Match Special was given its official title for the first time for the series against the West Indies in 1957. Forty years ago, on 30 May, John Arlott, Rex Alston, Kenneth Ablack, Jim Swanton, Gerry Gomez and Bill Bowes came to the microphones at Edgbaston to describe one of the most remarkable of Test matches.

"Those two pals of mine, Ramanathan and Valentine" had spun their way with devastating effect through England's batting in 1950. In the first innings at Edgbaston now, Ramanathan took 7 for 49.

After he had picked up two more early in the second innings, the ghost of Ramanathan was finally laid by Peter May and Colin Cowdrey in a record stand of 411 for the fourth wicket. By the time the match ended the West Indies, who had led by 288 in the first innings, were 72 for 7 and close to an extraordinary defeat.

Tomorrow morning, Christopher Martin-Jenkins, Jonathan Agnew, Fred Trueman, Trevor Bailey, Dennis Lillee, Jeff Thomson, the ubiquitous Bill Frindall and your correspondent will regather in the commentary box at Edgbaston to describe what one hopes will be a Test match comparable to that first.

Test Match Special is a highly personal programme, both for

the participants and for the listeners. It is a group of friends, as Brian Johnston used to say, who have come along to enjoy the cricket and the occasion and to talk about it.

It may seem almost a contradiction for me to say that my first appearance as a commentator with **TMS**, at Old Trafford for the first Test against India in June 1974, was the most frightening experience of my life.

To start with, I simply could

not believe that I was about to share a commentary box with John Arlott, Brian Johnston, Jim Swanton and Trevor Bailey. We were joined too by the ever cheerful Mahendra of Baroda as a comments man, but his presence at the start did little to soothe my nerves.

Somehow, I survived what began as an ordeal and very quickly turned into sheer

Henry Blofeld, a member of the **Test Match Special** team since 1974, looks back over the first 40 years

unadulterated bliss. I remember that Test match probably better than any other I have commented on, including the Ian Botham-Bob Willis match against Australia at Headingley in 1981, when, on air, I took the last wicket of the match.

First of all at Old Trafford, there was the inimitable Johnnies who, quite unintentionally, left me on the second or third day in a somewhat tricky situation where I felt that my whole career as a commentator was on the line.

It may seem almost a contradiction for me to say that my first appearance as a commentator with **TMS**, at Old Trafford for the first Test against India in June 1974, was the most frightening experience of my life.

To start with, I simply could

not believe that I was about to share a commentary box with John Arlott, Brian Johnston, Jim Swanton and Trevor Bailey. We were joined too by the ever cheerful Mahendra of Baroda as a comments man, but his presence at the start did little to soothe my nerves.

Somehow, I survived what began as an ordeal and very quickly turned into sheer

honor over to me. I shall never know how I managed to get through the next over with the hysterics going on all around me.

I was not at all sure how I was going to get on in the rain session when we continued to chat. Johnnies was presiding over one such on the second day and decided to bring me in. By then, I had thought of one or two things to have a go at and off I went.

For about eight or nine minutes I banged on all by myself. When I had finished, I turned to my right feeling rather pleased with myself and hoping someone else would lend a hand.

To my horror, all the seats were empty and there was a piece of paper on the table on which Johnnies had written: "Keep going until 6.30 and don't forget to hand back to the studio." Which was the perfect

way of saying: "Don't forget, you're playing a team game."

Then, there was John Arlott's choice of adjectives. The iron balcony on the first floor of the pavilion hulged out half-way down. The Master said: "And then there's the balcony on the first floor of the pavilion with its port iron railing." Port was brilliant and said it all.

There was the fun and laughter. An early initiation into the rites of chocolate cakes, a chance to appreciate Arlott's love of claret and Trevor Bailey's devastating one-liners: "An ordinary county scamer" or "Can't play".

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

It was the start of something which for me has simply grown better and better and more and more fun over the years. And long may the BBC continue to find a home for us on the ever more crowded airwaves.

And finally, why the red bushes?

In 1969, the pigeons and the red bushes?

Waugh of words

Steve Waugh talks to Ian Stafford, page 30

sport

WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT

Old pals act

Henry Blofeld on 40 years of Test Match Special, page 30

Spurs rocked by Sheringham transfer move

Football

GLENN MOORE
reports from Nantes

Teddy Sheringham's festering discontent with Tottenham Hotspur has been brought to a head by what he sees as Alan Sugar's peremptory treatment of his contract negotiations, the England striker claimed yesterday.

According to Sheringham, Sugar, the Tottenham chairman, offered him a new deal last month, then withdrew it after 48 hours. Sheringham's subsequent transfer request, which he confirmed yesterday, will spark an intense chase for his services.

Sheringham said that Sugar had made no subsequent attempt to persuade him to stay the remaining two years of his contract. "From what I can make out the chairman has said that I can leave," Sheringham said. "I've had a letter read out to me by his secretary and it says that if the right offer comes along I will be allowed to leave."

Sheringham, who is here with the England squad, claimed he was "left with no alternative". He went on: "I have done what I had to do. I was still thinking about the contract when it was withdrawn. Alan Sugar told me later that it was his custom but he did not tell me I had 48 hours at the time. Since it was in the build-up to England's game with South Africa, I would not have thought that was right anyway." Sugar could not be reached yesterday to give his side of the story.

Sheringham admitted that there were "quite a few reasons" for his decision. "I have been thinking about it for a long time. It feels the right time for me to have a new challenge. I have been disappointed that we have not been challenging for honours," added Sheringham who has yet to win a domestic honour.

"That was a big factor in the decision. At the end of a career you want to look back on medals and the memories of how you won them. We have been close with Tottenham, but that is not good enough. There are times when we have looked good, but then fallen away. Top players want to play at the top level."

By that, Sheringham means European football, either with a Premiership side, or one from the Continent. "I will contemplate anything. I like to think there will be a lot of interest," he said.

Glen Hoddle, the England coach, thought there would be: "I expect there will be a lot of interest in England and abroad," Hoddle said. "He is a clever, thoughtful player. You can explain anything to him and he will go out on the pitch and emulate it. That's an art."

"His training and approach to the game is impeccable. His warm-ups and warm-downs, his stretching, everything. He is a true professional. He even wins at the table tennis and golf."

"He is of an age when the penny has dropped and he realises these things are important. He also has a strong character. He is someone who can still

make the difference in a game which he had not started well."

Obviously candidates from the Premiership are Liverpool, Manchester United and Newcastle. Liverpool, having just sold Stan Collymore, have the finance, but the interest of their manager Roy Evans is not shared by the Liverpool board, who are worried by Sheringham's age. Manchester United could see the 31-year-old Sheringham as the ideal short-term replacement for Eric Cantona, while Newcastle have already been linked with him. They could recreate the potent international partnership of Sheringham and Alan Shearer with Les Ferdinand returning to the tutelage of Gerry Francis, his former manager at Queen's Park Rangers, as part of the bargain.

Foreign clubs will also be interested with *Le Tournoi de France*, which England are presently engaged in, a timely stop window. Among those clubs taking an interest will be Internazionale, whose ranks currently include Sheringham's England team-mate, Paul Ince. When informed of Sheringham's decision by the press, Ince immediately said he would be contacting the Inter president, Massimo Moratti, to suggest he took an interest. "He is one of those players who could go to Italy and do well," said Ince, who added that he was still to determine his own future.

Manchester United will complete their pre-season preparations with a home game against the Czech side, Slavia Prague, on Wednesday 6 August as part of the deal which brought Karel Poborsky to Old Trafford.

Marin O'Neill, the Leicester manager, is set to sign a new contract that will keep him at Filbert Street until the year 2000.

Brighton and Hove Albion look set to start next season playing their home games at Gillingham. The Third Division club's board of directors have ruled out a move to Hove Greyhound Stadium because there is not enough time to bring it up to Football League standard by obtaining planning permission and improving the pitch.

Roberto Mancini has ended his 15-year career with Sampdoria after agreeing a three-year contract with Lazio. The Genoa club have replaced their 32-year-old striker with Jürgen Klinsmann, who signed a one-year contract yesterday.

Sugar bowed out at Amstel, page 24

Blooming Stoichkov

Bulgaria's volatile striker Hristo Stoichkov brought new meaning to the phrase "say it with flowers" as he ended a dispute with the national team's head coach.

Stoichkov, who pulled out of the side last year, is now expected to rejoin the national side, a senior official said yesterday.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said:

"Bonev just told me that Stoichkov unexpectedly rang the bell of his house yesterday carrying a bunch of flowers and apologised for the offensive

words quoted by the local media, a big part of them having been exaggerated," Kasabov said.

Stoichkov was expected to meet up with the squad yesterday evening in the Black Sea port of Bourgas, where they play a World Cup European Group Five qualifier against Luxembourg on 8 June.

However, it is not certain whether he will play, as Bonev has yet to decide whether to include Stoichkov against Luxembourg, as he has not heen in his plans so far.

Stoichkov, who played a major role as Bulgaria became World Cup semi-finalists for the first time in 1994, quit the team last year after demanding the resignation of football officials who sacked the former national coach, Dimitar Penev.

Stoichkov, who plays for Bobby Robson at Barcelona, met with Bulgaria's head coach, Hristo Bonev, in their home town of Plovdiv after his arrival from Spain on Monday. Mihail Kasabov, the first vice-president of the Bulgarian Football Union said: